

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL  
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**THE WORKING PEOPLE OF LOWELL  
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK  
MARY BLEWETT/MARTHA MAYO**

**INFORMANT: GRACE MAY BURKE  
INTERVIEWER: SUZETTE JEFFERSON  
DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 1985**

**G = GRACE  
S = SUZETTE**

**Tape 85.26**

G: My grandmother and grandfather came from Ireland. (S: Umhm) Oh what's the name. I forget the county. Waterford. (S: Oh!) Waterford County. (S: Aha) They came from Ireland. And (--)

S: Now this is your mother's parents?

G: That's my mother's parents. My father's parents, um, his mother (--) Well they, they were, they're German, and his grandmother was born in Germany. But his mother was born in this country after his parents on that side came from Germany. My husband's parents were German. They came, they settled in Peoria, Illinois. And ah, of course mine settled here in Lowell.

S: Umhm. Now did your, did your grandparents come to Lowell, or did your parents come to Lowell?

G: Well my parents (--) My grandparents on my mother's side came from Ireland to Lowell.

S: And why did they come to Lowell?

G: Well!

S: For a job do you think?

G: Yah!

S: Uh huh.

G: Yah. Immigrants, you know. Irish immigrants came to Lowell. Then my husband's folks, they settled in Illinois. A lot of the Germans that came over, settled in Illinois.

S: Umhm.

G: And of course in later years he eventually got to Lowell in a round about way. That's a long story, you know, but he got to Lowell then and (--)

S: So your mother's parents came from Ireland, (G: Ireland) to Lowell, and did they have jobs in the mills?

G: That's what, yah.

S: That's what they came for?

G: Yah!

S: Do you know what they did in the mills?

G: Well then my mother, of course she had a family of ten and my mother was one of them. And she worked in the cotton mill just over the Boott Mill, (S: Umhm) you know?

S: How about her mother? Did she work in the mill? Your mother's mother?

G: My mother, yah!

S: No, but I mean your grandmother? Did she work in the mill?

G: No, she had to keep house for all the kids.

S: Yah! [Laughs]

G: A big family of kids you know.

S: How about her husband, your grandfather?

G: Well, well he worked. I'm not sure what he did when he first came, but they bought a little cottage on Lakeview Avenue, (S: Uh huh) right next to the Lithuanian Church down there on Lakeview Avenue now.

S: Oh, yah!

G: And there's a little store front there, (S: Aha) and he use to run a grocery and meat market, meat store, you know, and they lived in the back in the cottage. Well that's where I was born. (S: Oh!) And they raised, my grandmother raised their family there. Until eventually, my grandfather was a soft hearted guy. And anyone that had any trouble, they'd come to him, you know, on credit. They want their meat and they want their groceries on credit. (S: Umhm) Or if they need medicine or something, held give them a dollar. They needed money. Well he bankrupt himself (S: Oh no!) in that way, (S: Oh ) and had to go out of business.

S: Now when was that? Do you remember about what time?

G: It would have been eighty years ago.

S: Um. So that was before the depression?

G: Wait a minute, it's more than that. Oh gosh, way way back. A hundred years ago probably.

S: Ah.

G: And then he ah, they had to sell the cottage and they went renting (S: umhm) down on Glenwood Avenue in Centraville there. Until the youngest of the family, the rest of them were all married off, the youngest of them, they left to go work in Boston. One of them went to night school and she was going to be a stenographer. And the other one worked in one of the department stores. Well then the old folks couldn't keep the cottage anymore. So they had to break that up and they come to live with my mother and father (S: Umhm) when I was only about ten years old.

S: Oh, I see.

G: So that was on their side.

S: Aha. Now what about your father's parents?

G: Well they were coal miners.

S: They came from (--)

G: They were born in this country. (S: Uh huh) But his grandmother was born in Germany. (S: Umhm) You know, came over. And they were coal miners. And as he grew up, even the young boys they went in the mine, they went to the mine early. (S: Umhm) He went to work in the mines at fourteen years old, my husband. And for several years there (--)

S: Now where were these mines?

G: In Peoria, Illinois. Coal mines, they were all coal miners, all his family. And then he came, he was hurt on one, he fell off one of those trucks that go through the coal mine carrying the coal.

S: Oh, like a trolley, yah.

G: Yah, and got run over his knee and he was hurt. So he couldn't go back in the mine anymore. And then at that time, automobiles were starting to come into vogue. (S: Umhm) And he, and his brother, and a couple of more fellows, they decided to go to, move to, go to Flint, Michigan and work in the automobile factory making parts for these automobiles. (S: Uh huh) Hudson cars. (S: Hm!) And they worked a couple of years there and finally the rest of them got home sick and wanted to go back. But he stayed, and he roomed in the YMCA there. And while he was there he met a young fellow from Lowell, and got very friendly with him. And also, while he was there he took up a correspondence course with the International Correspondence School in Chicago on automobile repairing, you know. (S: Umhm) So this fellow was eventually coming home to Lowell. And he had a little roadster. And he asked him if he wanted to, how he would like to come ride home with him. And my husband said he always said he wanted to see one ocean or the other. So he decided. He gave up his job in Flint, the factory and rode home. And that's when he learned to drive a car. That fellow taught him how to drive a car.

S: Hm.

G: And when he got in Lowell, the funny part of it was that fellow lived in that house across the street.

S: Isn't that something!

G: And when we come up here oh, after we were married, and my Aunt had bought this house, and we come up to visit her after we were married. And we got on the street, he looked and he said, "I slept my first night in Lowell on that porch over there."

S: What a coincidence huh?

G: So ah, then he kept up his correspondence course. And this fellow, [unclear], they knew a man. His name was (--) Oh never mind. Anyway, he was in partnership with Mr. [Cumusky] that run the automobile agency for the Hudson and Essex in Lowell, up on the corner of Pawtucket Street, and it was Market Street then. That's all torn down now. That's where that rotary is.

S: Oh okay! Yah!

G: Yah! And so he got him a job in the auto, in the repair you know, to repairing cars.

S: Uh huh.

G: Well he worked there and he was only there less than two years. Taking the correspondence course and everything.

S: Umhm.

G: And, when (--) They gave him the service manager's job. And that's how he kept up the automobile business, you know, repairing cars,

S: Right.

G: Until he went in business for himself at a later date you know, on a little tiny small scale and (--)

S: Grew.

G: So it's there today yet, Burk Auto Service from way back sixty-five or more years.

S: Wow! Um, now let's see, that was your husband's family.

G: That's my husband.

S: Okay. And now what about your father's, your grandfather on your father's side? You said they came from Scandinavia?

G: They came from (--) They were born, according to the history they were born in Sweden.

S: Umhm.

G: And he was the, next to the youngest of the family. And there were about four boys. Three boys. Four boys and three girls in the family. And the oldest one of the family, when they came across, when the parents came across from Sweden they carried a bible (S: Umhm) at that time. So his decendents live up in Dracut, and they still have that Swedish bible (S: Hm) recording their experiences coming across from Sweden. And they said times were very hard. And they came across the mountains on sleds, walked across the mountains on sleds into Norway.

S: Hm!

G: And they settled in a town called Christiana, Norway. Well since then that has been renamed since the first war, renamed Oslo, Norway.

S: Oh!

G: But my father would always say he was born in Christiana, because that's where he, the name of the town then.

S: It's a big city now, huh?

G: Yah, and he said when the family (--) When he was two years old the family migrated to America. And they came to Canada first. (S: Umhm) And then gradually, I don't know how they got transportation, whether in carts, ox carts or, because I don't think there were any trains around then.

S: Do you know when they came?

G: Well he said he was only two years old then. It's over a hundred years ago, because he was seventy-four when he died, and he's dead forty-four years. Seventy-four, it's a hundred and eight years ago.

S: Wow!

G: So at that time. And then they gradually migrated down to the United States (S: Umhm) and they settled in a, they got to a town called Winnipeg in New Hampshire. And then they heard about the mills in Dracut.

S: Oh Dracut.

G: Then, so they came down and they settled in Dracut.

S: Oh!

G: But the funny part of it, well I wouldn't say funny, but their father, his father was a tailor in Sweden and in Norway. And the story is that he worked for a tailoring firm that helped to make the inaugural gown for the King of Norway when he was crowned. But so when he come to this country and (--)

S: But why did he come to this country?

G: Well looking for better, like all the immigrants.

S: Just to better his lifestyle?

G: Better climate. So they settled in Dracut and my father grew up there, then went to work in the mills out there on Pleasant Street.

S: Do you know the name of the mills that he worked at?

G: Well they use to (--) They called it the Navy Yard.

S: Oh right! Okay.

G: You know?

S: Yah.

G: They by J. Stevens, the Stevens Company. They called it the Navy Yard then, because they manufactured, when the war was on they were manufactured navy blankets and material to make the sailor's uniforms. Navy material to make the sailor's uniforms and all that kind of stuff.

S: Now which war are you speaking of?

G: World... Way back. Back, the First World War, before then.

S: Before then?

G: Mexican War and all that. Way back then.

S: Oh, okay.

G: You know?

S: All right.

G: But that's when, where, when they were (--) That's why they call it the Navy Yard, because they were making materials for the Navy.

S: Oh.

G: But the company that owned it was J.P. Stevens.

S: Stevens.

G: Yah.

S: Oh, okay.

G: So he worked in (--) Went as a young boy, went to work there.

S: Now how old was he do you think? Do you have any idea?

G: About twelve years old or so. And then as a bobbin boy, and sweeping the floor and all this you know? And then gradually he got interested in looms and learned how to weave. And he was a weaver for quite a few years, and he was mechanically inclined. And then he learned how to fix the looms if anything went wrong, you know, with them.

S: Umhm.

G: And he eventually become a loom fixer.

S: Now did he tell you any special stories of things that happened in the mills? When he was working there?

G: No. No.

S: Do you think he liked working in the mills?

G: Well, what else was there was? They had to live.

S: Yah.

G: The family had to live. And they had to have money. (S: Uh huh) So what could you do? There was nothing else to do. You had to like it whether you wanted it or not. (S: Yah) You know?

S: Yah.

G: Like all of us then.

S: So he worked from the age of twelve huh?

G: So uh, then he became a loom fixer. But he lived out there when they got married. My mother and father got married.

P: Now how did your Mom and Dad meet? Do you know?

G: Well they use to go to Saturday night dances.

S: Where were the dances?

G: Well little halls in Lowell. (S: Uh huh) And ah, my father was quite a dancer. And my mother too! That's why they use to meet at the dances. And every time they'd meet she was always his partner. When they use to have a prize waltz or something, (S: Umhm) they won many a prize for being the best waltzers.

S: Really!

G: That's where they met. That's when they got married, you know?

S: Yah. So now they, when they came to the dances, they didn't come with each other, They met each other?



G: They met each other, yah.

S: I see. And what did they get for prizes? Do you know?

G: Oh, I don't know. I don't know, but I wouldn't know.

S: It's just the honor of having, winning.

G: Yah, yah.

S: Ya. huh!

G: So.

S: So that's how they met.

G: That's how they met.

S: And where did they get married? Do you know what church?

G: Down here in the St. Patrick's, Saint Michael's Church.

S: Umhm. Oh the one right on Route 38 there.

G: Right down Sixth Street.

S: Oh, okay.

G: Yah, on Sixth Street. They were married down there.

S: Uh huh.

G: I was baptized there. My mother use to sing in the choir there.

S: Oh!

G: When the first Mass, after the new church. The Church was built there then. The Church they have now, when it was first built.

S: It was built in what? I think the sign said 1890 something?

G: Yah.

S: Yah.

G: Well anyway, after I was born down Lakeview Avenue, well then they moved out to Dracut, because my father was working there. And they had a little three room apartment out there.

S: Umhm.

G: And you called it a tenement, four tenement block.

S: Oh, it was an apartment in a tenement building?

G: Yah. (S: Uh huh) And so there was (--) In those days there was no conveniences. There was no running water. No hot water. There's no indoor toilet. No bath. There was these famous out houses you know, you hear tell em?

S: Now did everybody in the tenement share? How many apartments were in a tenement?

G: Three rooms in each.

S: In each apartment?

G: In each apartment.

S: How many apartments?

G: Four. Two on each side.

S: Oh I see. Okay.

G: Yah. That was on Sladen Street. I don't know if you're familiar with that area?

S: No.

G: Off Lakeview Avenue just beyond Pleasant Street.

S: Okay. That was in Dracut you said?

G: In Dracut.

S: And how long did you live there?

G: We lived there till I was about three or four years old, and they moved over on to Pleasant Street.

S: Umhm.

G: There's a fire house there now.

S: Now this is Pleasant Street in Dracut?

G: Yah.

S: Yah.

G: There was another apartment, same idea. (S: Umhm) It's the same idea. No running water. Just a pump in the sink to get you're drinking water. But no hot, no cold water. No bathroom, and the outhouse out in the back.

S: Now what did you use to heat the place with?

G: Black coal, black stove and we would heat it with coal.

S: So you would buy coal?

G: They'd buy coal you know by the ton. (S: Uh huh) You know, and ah, that's the only way you'd heat the place.

S: Wow!

G: So if you wanted to take a bath you'd have to take the big (--) My mother would get the big wash tub, (S: Umhm) and put it in front of the stove, you know, and fill it up with lukewarm water. I use to say the cleanest got in first, [Both laugh] and so on. And then we'd wash ourselves and she'd wash our back. And step out and put a towel around us and (--)

S: How many children were there in your family?

G: Well when we lived there, there were three. And my fourth sister, my next one, sister was born after they moved to Lowell on, up on Agawam Street, because my father had got work in this Bay State Woolen Mill. (S: Oh) Not a cotton mill, a woolen mill, (S: Okay) and they moved from Dracut down there.

S: And what did he do there? He was a weaver there?

G: No, he was a loom fixer.

S: Loom fixer.

G: And ah, to be near his work. You know, to work.

S: Umhm.

G: Finally we migrated from there over to Bleachery Street. It's the Prince Avenue now.

S: Oh okay. Yah!

G: Yah, in a tenement there. They had these up and down, but four tenements. You know, big long blocks with four tenements. We had one of them.

S: Umhm.

G: Before I was, about (--) Well then I went to work in the mill when I was fourteen.

S: Oh!

G: I graduated from the Butler School.

S: Now where is Butler School again?

G: That's on Gorham Street, (S: Okay) just beyond Gallagher Square, you know? (S: Uh huh) And ah, I graduated from there when I was fourteen and I went to work that summer in the mill.

S: Now why did you go to work? Because that was just what was expected of you? Or(-)

G: Well I suppose I could have gone to high school, (S: Yah) you know? Some of my class did go on to high school. But things were hard. We needed the money. (S: Yah) They weren't getting much pay then, you know.

S: How much do you think your father was earning?

G: My father, the highest pay he ever made was fourteen dollars a week.

S: Uh, jeeze.

G: When I went to work in the mill as a hander-in, I use to make from \$2.25, \$2.50, \$2.75 a week. My mother would have the \$2.00 and I'd have the rest for spending money.

S: Now did your mother ever work in the mill?

G: Yah. She worked in the cotton mills you know?

S: Oh she did! Okay.

G: Yah, before she got married. The Boott Mill, you know?

S: How old was she when she went to work in the mill?

G: Well they all went when they were twelve and fourteen years old.

S: And what did she do?

G: She was a spinner in the cotton mill. Of course I don't know anything about the cotton mills, cause I worked in the woolen mills.

S: Now which was the name of the mill she worked in?

G: She worked at the Boott Mill.

S: The Boott Mill?

G: It's there now. (S: Ya) Yah. It was a cotton mill.

S: Oh!

G: And, but I worked in there you know. When I went to work, my father worked in the woolen mill. We worked in the woolen mill. I got a picture I seen in the paper awhile back about the type of work that I use to do.

S: Oh fine! I'll just stop this.

[Recorder is turn off, then on again]

S: It must have been hard on your eyes?

G: Oh I don't know.

S: Didn't bother your eyes at the time?

G: Didn't bother them, no.

S: You did that when? When you were fourteen?

G: No I, we use to, I use to sit under the frame.

S: Umhm, when you were fourteen?

G: And hand these threads to the one who was putting it through.

S: So you had to sit on the floor?

G: Sit on a chair underneath the frame.

S: Underneath the frame.

G: And hold a bundle of yarn there and then pull a thread out at a time. And when she put the hook in through the eyelet, I put the (--)

S: And you did that all day long?

G: That was a hander-in until oh, two or three years. That's when I use to get \$2.25, \$2.50, and \$2.75 dollars a week then. And then I learned to be a drawer-in, which that is a drawer-in.

S: Oh, then you moved up and you sat up at the (--)

G: On the outside, you know?

S: The outside and you had somebody else hand you the (--)

G: Yah, and we use to do, make old coatings, fancy woolen coatings and worsted men suitings. And plaid back blankets they called them. They use to sell them to people that go across on the big steamers you know? Steamer rugs.

S: Oh, to put around them?

G: Steamer rugs they called them. (S: Yah) We used to draw them in.

S: Now which mill was this at?

G: This was the Bay State Mill up on Lawrence Street, but that has been torn down now. That's not there anymore.

S: So what did you think of that kind of work? Was it hard?

G: No, I liked it!

S: You did?

G: I liked it. It was interesting.

S: Uh huh.

G: And ah (--). Well I was able to make thirty-five, or forty dollars a week sometimes at that job, which is equivalent by today's standards, would be a hundred, a hundred and a quarter. And of course that's, when I say today's standard, forty dollars a week. It would have been two hundred today. By today's (--).

S: So that's pretty good! Yah!

G: Yah. You know, until I was twenty-eight when I got married and left.

S: Oh, that's something. Now you were born in Wigginville?

G: No, I was born in Lowell.

S: You were born in Lowell.

G: But, after we (--) When I was about fifteen we lived on Bleachery Street, off Prince Avenue. (S: Umhm) Then my father bought a little cottage out in Wigginville.

S: Oh, okay. He had saved enough money?

G: Well he bought it and we got a good chance on it. A man on, one of his weavers was leaving Lowell and he asked him if he wanted to, you know, was interested in having his own home. (S: Hm) And my father went down to the Co-op Bank with a hundred dollars or so and got a loan. I think he bought the house for fifteen hundred dollars, believe it or not.

S: Gee!

G: And I saw in the paper only about a year ago where that house was sold for seventy-eight hundred, seventy-eight thousand.

S: That's incredible isn't it!

G: Yah, it's changed hands a couple of times (S: Yah) since then. But I was twenty-eight when I got married and lived there. I lived there, you know, and left. And then (--)

S: What about your (--) Going back to your tenements that you lived in before your father bought the cottage, um, you said there were three rooms? And what were the rooms like? I mean like a living room?

G: Well on Bleachery Street there was an up and down. There were three rooms, the living room, the dining room and the kitchen in the back. (S: Uh huh) And then there was three bedrooms upstairs.

S: Okay.

G: So we had come up in the world then. So there was, they had (--) By that time they had built an indoor toilet.

S: Now when was that about? What time?

G: Oh, sixty-five years ago before I was, you know, long before I was married. Ten years before I was married and I'm married sixty-three years. And that was seventy, over seventy years ago. But they had one off the kitchen. It was a little cubby hole and they had a tin bathtub and a one seat, a toilet. We had come up in the world then.

S: Did you have hot and cold running water?

G: No, no.

S: Just cold?

G: No, just cold water.

S: Oh.

G: You had to keep the coal fire going all the time to heat your water. But then, at that time gas came out.

S: Uh huh.

G: And ah, my father insisted we get a gas stove. My mother was scared stiff. (S: laughs) Afraid we'd blow up. But that helped in the summer when you didn't have to put the coal fire on.

S: Oh ya!

G: In the summer you could use the gas for cooking, heating, things and you know?

S: Uh huh.

G: But ah, we had come up in the world then. Until we went up, moved up on into Wigginville. And we had a nice bath. Well I wouldn't say nicer, it wasn't fancy, but enamel tub and toilet right off the kitchen.

S: Now how many rooms did you have in that house?

G: Well there was, one, two, four, seven. Three bedrooms, and four downstairs; living room, dining room, sitting room and the kitchen. And then the bath off the kitchen, and a little pantry. So that was (--)

S: And how many bedrooms did you have?

G: Three bedrooms.

S: Three bedrooms?



G: Yah.

S: Now did you use your basement? Did you have a basement in that house?

G: Oh, there was a cellar.

S: Uh huh.

G: Of course a dirt cellar at that time. No cement cellar.

S: So what did you do with the cellar? Did you use it for storage or?

G: Oh yah, anything. Then there was a coal bin there, you know, too.

S: Oh, okay.

G: Because in the winter we had to have coal.

S: Well where did you get your coal from? Did somebody come around and sell it to you?

G: Oh yah. Coal companies. They use to come around in trucks with bags of coal.

S: Umhm.

G: You know, and they'd come. Oh I use to have it here, when we first came here. There was a window open there and we had a coal bin down cellar. And the coal man would carry his bags of coal and just put it down the slide into the coal bin in the cellar, because we heated with coal then. (S: Umhm) Coal furnace.

S: Now when you were growing up do you remember, was there any special room in the house that you got together in with friends and company? Or are you just, all over the house?

G: Well.

S: Like the kitchen or the living room?

G: Well the kitchen.

S: Yah, it was (--).

G: Cause when my grandfather had to give up his home and had to come with us, (S: umhm) one, two, there was four rooms. The living room, kitchen and two bedrooms and the pantry. Well they had to give up the living room for my grand... a bedroom for my

grandmother and grandfather. So they lived with us for awhile until, well he died and she died six months later.

S: Do you remember their funerals or were you too young?

G: Yes, I remember he died on Christmas Day of pneumonia. He ended up working in the, one of the cotton mills down there on Central Street, Appleton Mill.

S: Umhm.

G: And he use to walk from the Butler School down there in the coldest of weather to work in there for five dollars a week. And he'd bring that five dollars home. And she'd give my mother two dollars. My mother would take two dollars a week. I won't live for nothing. She gave my mother two dollars to pay for her food. And she and my grandfather would keep a dollar for themselves. But she had the other two dollars for incidentals.

S: So now (--)

G: Not like today!

S: No! Now when he died did you have (--) I don't know, in those days did they have the funeral in a funeral home? Or did they in your (--)

G: Oh there was no funeral home. (Repeats) There were no funeral homes then.

S: So how did they (--)

G: He died on Christmas Day.

S: Oh that must have been sad huh?

G: And they just, the undertaker came to the house.

S: Umhm.

G: And go shut the door off the kitchen. Went into there and did their embalming and everything there. And laid him out right there. And when everything was all settled, he opened the door and had us come, my folks come in (S: Umhm) and see him. So the neighbors come, you know, and to see him.

S: Now how long did he stay like that, your grandfather, before they buried him?

G: Oh. probably a day and a half. (S: Umhm) You know, a day and a half or so.

S: Now was it (--) When people came by to see him, was it real quiet or were people you know, drinking and eating.

G: Well they sit out. Some of them would sit out in the kitchen with a pipe or something. I don't recall there was ever any drinking. (S: Umhm) But they'd sit out and talked you know, the men would with her. There was always a bowl of tobacco and Teedee pipes on the table. So the men would fill their pipes and sit down and talk about (--)

S: Now who would do that? Like your father did that?

G: Yah, yah. That was...

S: Now how about your mother? Did she cook or did neighbors bring in food for the funeral?

G: Well I guess some of the neighbors did bring in a little. I remember I was ten years old then, a little bit you know? (S: Umhm) And she'd make a pot of coffee, or something and well that was it.

S: Yah. And the minister or the priest came in and?

G: No he didn't come to the house. He was brought to the church. (S: Oh) You know, and had a mass. (S: O.k.) And ah, at the Sacred Heart Church, because we were living in that parish then.

S: Now where's Sacred Heart? On which Street?

G: Up on Moore Street.

S: Okay, okay. And so, then how did you, how did they bring his body in the coffin? Did they bring it in a horse drawn wagon?

G: They had a hearse. (S: Uh huh) But whoever went to the funeral [unclear]. There was no automobiles then. So they had hacks. You know what a hack is?

S: I'm not sure. Can you describe one?

G: Well you might see one in these old fashion movies in London, where they had the two seater closed carriages. Two would ride frontwards, and two backwards. And the driver would sit outside up on top.

S: Oh, okay. .

G: And horse drawn.

**Tape I, side A ends**  
**Tape I, side B begins**

S: So they ah (--)

G: So they'd figure on how many were going and they'd order so many hacks. And ah, they use to have stables. The stable on Gorham Street, and they had another one on Hurd Street. (S: Umhm) Where they use to keep the horses and these carriages. Now if there was... All there was... The electric cars were coming in then. And that's the only form of transportation there was, except walk. But if there were something special, like somebody wanted, having a wedding, they'd hire a hack. Or wanted a christening, they might hire a hack to take them down.

S: Now did your father hire all the hacks for all the people coming to the funeral?

G: Well they'd have to hire (--) The undertaker would hire them. You know, by how any is coming. And then he, so he, like the undertaker today, you know?

S: So the undertaker took care of everything?

G: Yah he took care of everything. And ah, so they use to have a stable on Hurd Street. That isn't there any (--) They'd keep the horses and the hacks. That isn't there anymore. That's where the Co-operative Bank is today, on Hurd Street. That's been torn down. But up above that was a recreation hall. And I guess they use to have sociables there. At the time I was only eight, ten, under seven or eight, eight, nine years old then. (S: Uh huh) But there were two men in Lowell, they were lawyers. And their name was, one was Bunker and the other was Hennessey. And they had a lawyer's office. Bunker and Hennessey they were known by. And they had a lease on that hall and they turned it into a roller skating rink. And, but the skates then were just, there were no shoes skates or anything. They had to screw them on with a little key. And then my Uncle, my father's one older brother, he was kind of mechanical. And he knew Bunker. And they had a little room back off that, the hall to keep all the skates. So he use to take care of the skates. And if there's anything wrong, he use to repair them. Like a (--)

S: Now this is when you were a child? Yah..

G: And then there was a gallery on that there. And they used to run, have a what they called a German band. You know, great big (makes sounds). You know, brass bands. (S: Umhm) And ah, every Saturday, certain nights in the week, or afternoon they'd play two hours in the afternoon and two hours at night. And they'd play all these Venetian Waltz, you know? And the regular waltz and the Blue Danube. Brass band played all that music. And my father use to take me and my brother down. And when he come down on Saturday afternoon and visited his brother, and we'd go up in the gallery and watch them, and they'd skate as they go in time to that music, you know. (S: Hm!) The waltz music, you know? And he had two sons. They were twins, Freddie and Francis Ecklund. They were teenage boys, sixteen, seventeen years old. Of course they learned

to skate, and they got pretty good at it. And they got so that they were giving skating exhibitions, roller skating exhibitions. And they got them a little [Count] Bunker and then got them a little uniform to wear. (S: Umhm) And then they use to work there helping out girls, helping them to put the skates on. Like the girls, to get their skates on, screw them on, see they're on right, you know?

S: Oh! Yah.

G: So ah, that's (--)

S: That's what happened to the hack stable.

G: Huh?

S: That's what happened to the stables.

G: Well once the automobile started to come in, and they started using automobiles (S: Umhm) for funerals and things, that was the end of the stable and the horses and everything. So eventually that got tore down. And ah, well what's there today? The Co-operative Bank and I think there's a ah, Doctor Poor I think has his office there, Optician. And Bain Pest Control use to have a store right there. Well that's a little store there now.

S: Umhm. Which street is it again?

G: Hurd Street.

S: Hurd Street. Okay. Now after you hired the hack you'd go to the cemetery and there'd be a little service there at the cemetery?

G: Well the priest would go and read over the grave you know? And they'd bring people back to our house, and then they'd disperse and you'd be on your own.

S: Now did they have (--) Did your parents believe in wearing black for any period of time?

G: Oh yes! You had to have black for a year.

S: You did? Now that was just your parents or?

G: Yah!

S: Or did your whole family have to?

G: No. Blanche, her sister and well my mother. Her sisters are supposed to wear black for a year.

S: Uh huh.

G: And then black and white for six months. And then you could go into any color.

S: Oh my gosh! Really! Now could they socialize? I mean, could they go out and have fun?

G: Oh yah, yah.

S: But you just had to wear black huh?

G: Yah, let them know you're in mourning.

S: Yah. And your grandmother you said, died six months after he did?

G: She died. We had moved then from there in Livingston Street, that's in back of the Butler School. And we moved then on to Prince Avenue, which is Prince Avenue now. And she, we were only living there six months when she died. She took a (--) Had high blood, what today they would call high blood pressure, you know?

S: Umhm.

G: And she took a shock. And she was paralyzed a whole side down. And she couldn't talk, or eat, or swallow, or anything. And she just laid there for ten days.

S: Did you have doctors come in?

G: Yah, but they couldn't do anything.

S: Yah. Did people ever go to the hospital in those days?

G: No.

S: No? Was there any hospital wound here?

G: I guess there was, but ah (--) I can remember when there wasn't St. Joseph's Hospital. That's what they called a Corporation Hospital. The Merrimack Street side of St. Joseph's Hospital was once what they called a Corporation Hospital. It was a white building. And that hospital was built by the owners of Corporation Mills. The mills you see, for the benefit of the workers in the mill. Now that was still there. My older son is sixty-one years old. When he was four years, three or four years old I had to have him, he had to have his tonsils out. And he had it there. So that was over sixty-years (S: Um) before they tore that down and started St. Joseph's Hospital there.

S: But when you were little, like say when your grandmother died and grandfather died, were people afraid of hospitals then? Or did they go if they really had to?

G: Well I don't think they ever went. They depended on the doctors unless there was something real (--) Nobody ever went for babies. They always had their babies in the home, you know?

S: In the home?

G: And ah, unless there was something real (--)

S: Real bad.

G: Real bad I guess. Like I can remember. I guess St. John's was just a small place then you know. So people just stayed at home, and took their medicine and see what happened.

S: Um. So you said your grandmother and grandfather lived with you until they passed away. (G: Yah) Okay. Um, let's see. Well you lived in a lot of different houses. Do you remember any particular house that sticks out in your mind as home, or?

G: Well the last one.

S: The last one? The one on Wigginville?

G: Yah. Wigginville, yah.

S: Yah. Why was that called Wigginville? Do you know?

G: Well, oh many, years, years back there was a man name Wiggin that owned, oh, all the property around there. So that's where it got its name, from Mr. Wiggin, because he owned all the property. Over a hundred years ago probably.

S: Hm. And so that was the house that your father bought, that was in Wigginville.

G: That's the house he bought, yah.

S: Right. Do you remember any kind of special foods that your mother use to cook? Or any special days, like say, she would cook bread on one day, or a special dish?

G: She always baked her own bread.

S: She did?

G: You couldn't buy bread in the stores then.

S: You couldn't?

G: No. No.

S: And there weren't any people coming around selling?

G: No. No such thing. She always baked bread.

S: Did she have a special day to bake bread, or?

G: Well, whenever we'd run out, (S: Umhm) you know, she'd bake five or six big loaves and a couple of pans of biscuits every time she would bake. (S: Um) And, baked her own cakes and everything. And she'd go up to the store and we use to get a shin soup bone for a nickel. Do you know what a shin soup bone is? (S: Umhm) We used to get it up the market for a nickel. Now they're two dollars, (S: Yah) three dollars today. And she use to have a great big iron pot, and she'd make a big pot of, well, vegetable soup or pea soup. Ah, whatever, you know. And we'd have a couple of big meals of the pea, of the soup, whatever it was. And then she'd keep the meat and chop it up the next day with onions and stuff and make another meal of hash for a nickel.

S: Hm. That's incredible. Now how about any other special dishes she made? Did you have a favorite dish that your mother use to cook?

G: Oh ya! Oyster scallop and Johnny cake. We use to have Johnny cake with the pea soup,

S: Umm.

G: [Laughs] There was a little rhyme that went with that. "Pea soup and Johnny cake makes a Frenchman's belly ache." (S: Laughs) It's because it was so good, you'd eat so much of it, you'd have a stomach ache, you know. Well, [words unclear]. A regular down to earth cook. Plain cooking you know? But (--)

S: Did you have a lot of meat in your diet?

G: Huh?

S: Did you eat a lot of meat?

G: Not too much as I recall. Of course later on when we got working my mother earned more money coming in. She was able to buy more meat, (S: Umhm) and we got more meat.

S: So you had a lot of soups and things like that, (G: Yah) and stews?



G: We never knew what a steak was, or anything like that. (S: Yah) You know, we couldn't afford it.

S: Umhm.

G: Well then, but after a couple of us got working, more money coming in and (--)

S: You said there was four children in your family?

G: There was um, six.

S: Six? Oh! Now what place were you like? You were the oldest or (--)

G: I was the oldest.

S: Uh huh.

G: Then my brother. Then I had a sister, but she was a twin. She and a boy. They were born when we lived over in Dracut in one of the tenements.

S: Umhm.

G: And then my sister Nan was born in Lowell. Then my sister Hilma was born over on Bleachery, and Bertha born over on Bleachery Street. Now my brother's dead. And my sister the nun, she went away to be a nun, (S: Umhm) and she's dead. And ah, well there's just the rest of us left. But I just got word last night that one of them is up in the Lowell General now in the intermediate care, with ah, well they said she had angina something. A condition she's been a whole week with. She couldn't breathe, (S: oh!) or lay down. She slept in a chair. And finally they got her at the hospital. And the doctor said there was fluid in her lungs. So now she's in the intermediate care. So I don't know how that's going to come out.

S: How old is she?

G: She'd be about seventy-eight. I was fourteen when she was born.

S: What do you remember about Wigginville? Um, like any (--) If you were to walk out the door of your house in Wigginville what would you see up and down the street? Like it was houses, or stores, or?

G: No. Well there was a little square in Wiggin. The electric cars use to go straight out, which they called Wigginville, and at the Square it'd turn to the right and go over a bridge and to to South, would be South Lowell.

S: Oh, okay.

G: Well there was a little Square there. And there was a little meat market and a little variety store, and a couple of little stores on the corner, you know? That's all.

S: Umhm. Were there a lot of vendors that use to come by on the street selling things? Like oh, a rag man?

G: Oh yah, yah. Oh a rag man. My mother got all her things. She always had a big, great big sack and rag bag. And each scraps of rag would go into that bag, you know? (S: Umhm) And every so often held come around on his wagon and he'd have all the things, brooms and washtubs and washboards. All pans of all kinds hanging. And then he'd have a price on all of them. And then he'd come, "Rags, Rags!" And of course we'd run out with the rag bag. (S: Umhm) And held weigh them and give so much a pound for it. And you pick out what you want. And he had a little book, and he'd say well, if you (--) If the thing's a dollar and you have just say seventy five cents worth of rags, "Well all right you could have it," but the next time you come you wouldn't get anything till you had that paid up.

S: Oh! Now what did he use the rags for?

G: My mother (--) It's just scraps.

S: Yah, but what did the man want?

G: Well I suppose he use to sell them to paper mills you know?

S: Oh!

G: Things like that. Sell his stuff to paper mills.

S: Now what did you do for (--) Did somebody come by with ice too?

G: Yes, yes, we had the iceman. We had the old fashion ice chest, you know? And you'd lift the cover and put the ice in it. And when you needed ice, you had a card, "ICE", and you put it up in your front room window. And when he come by and see that card, you needed ice. (S: Umhm) And he'd bring the ice in. And course there would be a pan underneath the ice chest, and you had to empty it every night. If you didn't you'd wake up in the morning and it was over, the ice would melt, it was overflowed on the floor.

S: [Laughs] Yah, how often did you have to get ice?

G: Oh, a couple of times a week. It was the only way we kept the food, you know, then. There was no, no refrigerators.

S: How long did that last? Until (--) When did refrigerators come?

G: Well I never got a refrigerator until I come in here. Until I moved in here I (--) Our first was an ice chest here. And then when the electric refrigerators started to come out, then my husband, we invested into an electric refrigerator.

S: Hm.

G: So I've been here sixty-three years. So that must be about sixty years ago since the first refrigerator electric refrigerator come out. (S: Wow!) There was no electric irons. We had the old fashion irons. Heavy, heavy irons you know?

S: How did you heat them?

G: Well you had to have a coal fire, (S: Uh huh) or a gas fire with a plate over the gas and have these heavy irons on it. Let it get good and hot. And it had a holder, a mat holder, you know? And lift it off and then iron your clothes while the iron was hot. And then put it back and go and get the other hot one. And then iron.

S: Oh. So you had two different irons, one heating while the other (--)

G: One heating while you're using the other one.

S: Oh!

G: So there was no television, no radio.

S: So (--)

G: You tell the kids that today they can't believe it.

S: No. It's hard to understand, isn't it?

G: Yah.

S: Boy! So what other kind of people came up and down the street selling things?

G: Well we were on a dead end street, you know, so we didn't get any of that, much of that.

S: Yah.

G: So. But of course I had been working in the mill then. And I use to get up and have to walk from there a mile, down to work. My father and (--)

S: You'd walk with him to work in the morning?

G: Yah, and walked back with him at night.

S: Well what kind of hours did you work there?

G: When I first started to work, we use to start at six-thirty in the morning (S: Oh) as a handler-in. Six-thirty in the morning and work till five-thirty at night. (S: Umhm) And then (--)

S: And that was what, six days a week?

G: No, Saturday you got out at noon.

S: Oh you did? (G: Yah) Okay.

G: Big deal! [Both laugh] You had Saturday afternoon off.

S: Boy! So what did you do for (--) When you were growing up what did you do for fun?

G: Well there was this casino on Thorndike Street. It later become known as the Commodore. (S: Umhm) Do you know where? (S: I think I, yah) Do you remember that? Well when that was first built and I was a teenager, well several of us girls, there was a group about six of us, every Saturday night, they'd have dances there every Saturday night. (S: Um) And we'd meet, we'd go up every Saturday night, and meet at a certain part of the dance floor. And there used to be a bunch of fellows too. Teenage boys in upper twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two. And they use to go up too. And we'd all meet in that bunch you know?

S: So you could go out at nighttime? You didn't have to worry about being safe or anything?

G: Oh, there was none of that business then, no. I'd go down to the end of my street and get the electric car. (S: Umhm) And go down and meet my chum down at Paige's clock. That's where Brighams, you know, where Brighams is today. (S: Uh huh) That's Paige's clock, meet my chums there. And then we'd walk up and up Appleton Street to the bar. Then meet there at quarter past eleven and hurry up down Appleton Street to get down to the old Post Office quick, to get the last electric car back home up to Wigginville.

S: Yah! You had to be home by a special time?

G: Well you'd have to, if you didn't get that car.

S: So it was more because you didn't want to miss the car?

G: You'd have to walk!

S: Yah! [Laughs] A long way. So did you have a lot of social activities through your church or?

G: I never did through the church, because when I was smaller, when I was about ten years old, my mother, when these green trading stamps came into vogue, my mother had a book. And she use to save these green trading stamps. (S: Umhm) And when they come, she got a book full. She and my father went down to redeemed them. And she saw a mandolin up on the wall, you know? Of course when my father was a young man, a young boy, teenage, he learned to play the guitar. And he played in a mandolin, banjo, guitar club in Lowell at that time. And ah, he said to my mother, "Let's get a mandolin and let Grace take lessons." So I was only ten then. So they got the mandolin. So there was a man, a teacher who taught mandolin, banjo, guitar here in Lowell, Mr. Hovey. And he had a studio in the Wyman Exchange Building, you know, at that time. So my father went down to see him. He brought me down with the mandolin to give me lessons. Well I took lessons there for, well until before, till I went into the mill.

S: Till you were about what? Fourteen?

G: Yah, from ten, about three years I use to take lessons.

S: How much did lessons costs?

G: Fifty cents.

S: That was a lot though for your father to give up.

G: It was.

S: Out of his salary.

G: Yah. Yah.

S: So he thought it was important.

G: Yah. But he still had his guitar. And when I was able to learn to play a few little small pieces, you know, in my book, and he'd get his guitar out and he'd tune up to the mandolin you know, and he'd accompany me on the guitar. That was his passtime.

S: Now did he ever earn extra money through playing his music?

G: He never did. No.

S: No?

G: But then (--)

S: How about your sisters, did they, and brothers, did they earn any?

G: Well one sister, I learned, taught one of them to play the mandolin. (S: Umhm) And then another. My mother eventually got a piano. And another sister, she got her piano lessons. So the three of us used to play together. And we became known then in Lowell as the Ecklund Sisters.

S: Really!

G: And every sociable that was in the church or around, we were asked to play, The Ecklund Sisters.

S: And did they pay you for that?

G: No. That was just (--)

S: No, you just volunteered.

G: Yah, entertainment you know?

S: Uh huh.

G: Church sociables and clubs, and (--)

S: And did you sing along with the playing, or it was just playing?

G: Yah, we got so we started. We got brave! [Both laugh] We got brave and kind of harmonized when we'd sing the popular songs, you know? (S: Umhm) We kind of harmonized with the popular songs.

S: Do you remember what popular songs were you sang?

G: Oh gosh, I don't know. Well I can remember the, it was a hit at that time. After the World War II. No, World War I. "There's A Rose That Grows In No-Man's Land, and It's Beautiful To See". I tried to sing, but I can't sing anymore cause I'm (--) [Sings a few words] "There's a rose that grows in no-man's land and it's beautiful to see. It's a one red rose the soldier knows, it's ..." Ooh I forget that, but it was about the nurses, the Red Cross nurses.

S: Oh helping them in the line.

G: That was very popular then.

S: Uh!

G: Then, then we use to, when the soldiers came back to the First World War, and they were, came back to Camp Devens, that's Fort Devens now, (S: Umhm) to be processed you know, and let go. (S: right) And there was a, what they called a community, a Community Service here in Lowell. And there was the Knights of Columbus, the YMCA, the Jewish Auxiliary, and the Lowell Community Service, different organizations. (S: Umhm) And they use to, their work was to social work. Was to get a bunch of these entertainers that do different things, you know, singers and elocutionists and violinists and tapdancers, and put on a program and go down to Camp Devens (S: oh) and entertain the soldiers.

S: How did you get down there?

G: Well, there was automobiles that had come in then. Great big seven passenger touring car. So they use to rent two of them. That would fill. So there'd be seven passengers. So that would be fourteen entertainers. (S: Umhm) You see, we'd go down. So me and my two sisters, they'd call on us all the time to go down, put on a number, you know?

S: And you did that for volunteer work too?

G: That's all volunteer work. And then when the show, a hour show, when the show was over they had a phonograph there and played dance music. And the girls use to dance with the soldiers.

S: What else did they have for entertainment besides your sisters and you?

G: Huh?

S: What else besides your sisters and you did they have for acts?

G: Well there was two young girls about eight, ten years old, they were taking dancing lessons you know. And they use to dance, and ballet dancing and stuff. Then there was, well you wouldn't know them, but Jimmy Donnelly, Nora Longdan, Mae Wrenn. Wrenn's have that store on Prescott Street, you know? The, all the hockey, sell hockey and skates.

S: Oh. Okay.

G: Well Mae Wrenn. Mae Wren and, oh several well known singers, and elocutionists, and pianists, you know? They all put on their own .

S: Now what did the elocutionists do? Did they recite poems?

G: No. They had poems and some kind of (--) Well they tell us some funny story, you know? (S: Oh!) And ah, a poem or something like that. We were always gone. Ah, being called on. So like that I never joined a social club, because I was always (--)

S: You were so busy doing that.

G: Yah. Then they had on, over what use to be Brockleman's Store, that place at the corner of Merrimack, of Bridge Street now, there, that store there, a convenient store. Well up on the top floor there, there use to be a hall, a dance hall they called the Prescott Hall. That's where my mother and father use to go to dance years ago! And on the other half of that floor there were rooms there. And this Community Chess people, they formed a girls club. They had two lady councilors, and the girls in Lowell that want to join the club. But their purpose (--) They could join, but their purpose (--) And then they ran dances Saturday night in the dance hall, (S: Umhm) for these soldiers that use to come from Camp Devens to Lowell on Saturdays. And free dancing up there. But these girls that belonged to the Girls Club would have to come in and dance with them. They couldn't buy tickets to go over to the dance or anything. That was just for the service, of service the soldiers. Well then of course it wasn't a total loss, because they had a nurse from the Lowell General Hospital came in and gave the instructions in first aid. And they had a cooking teacher come in. And, a sewing teacher come in. And a dance teacher come in, teach them ballet and things, you know? So the girls had something to entertain them all week, but on Saturday night they would entertain the soldiers.

S: That's what they did in return for all these lessons?

G: Yah. And in the meantime I had joined Roy Dunfey's Orchestra. He had a little orchestra, Dunfey? You remember the Dunfey family of (--) Well the father, he worked for the Hancock Insurance Company. And they were on the third floor of that building. And Roy had a little orchestra and he had got, because of seeing me and my sisters you know, he wanted something different in his orchestra. And he contacted me to see if I'd play with him in his orchestra. I played the mandolin for awhile, but then I went and got a banjo, because a banjo was a little louder than a mandolin with an orchestra.

S: Oh! [Laughs]

G: So he used, we used to go around to dances two or three nights a week to play the dances.

S: And that was all volunteer?

G: Huh?

S: That was volunteer, or you got paid for that?

G: No. I got paid for that.

S: Oh.



G: But he contacted the councilors of the Club and got the job paying for the, playing for the soldiers. He got that job playing. So every Saturday night, summer and winter for a couple of years we played every Saturday night in that hall, while they had the soldiers at Camp Devens.

S: Ha! Now how much do you think you got paid for ... ?

G: I'd get two dollars a night.

S: Two dollars. That's not bad.

G: Two dollars.

S: That was pretty good.

G: Then when he use to get jobs on outside town, Littleton and Tewksbury, little town halls, we graduated to five dollars a night for playing.

S: Hm. So you were bringing in pretty good money?

G: I was working in the mill and I was making around \$30.00 a week, and I would sometimes make \$15.00, \$ 20.00 a week playing. Sometimes three nights a week.

S: Were you tired at the end of the week?

G: Yah!

G: Yah! (laughs)

G: But (--)

S: How late did the socials last? I mean what time did they usually end?

G: Oh, well at eleven, eleven thirty. (S: Umhm) You know?

S: So everybody could catch the street car back.

G: Yah. And then the way the soldiers got back, there was a garage on Bridge Street where the Goodwill place is now. (S: Umhm) They had a, what they called a Jitney for the seven passenger touring cars. And a bunch of the soldiers, they'd go down there and hire a Jitney to drive them back to Camp Devens, you see, on Saturday night. They'd all pitch in you know to pay to get back home, to get back to the camp. So, and that's where I met my husband.

S: Oh he was a soldier?

G: No, he was working at this garage.

S: Oh!

G: You know? And the fellows that run the jitneys, they stored their jitneys in the garage.

S: Now Jitney was the name of the car?

G: They called it Jitneys because they hired them. Seven passenger touring car.

S: Umhm

G: But they, people were hiring for the crowd, to take, they called them Jitneys then. And these fellows that had a bunch of them and kept them stored in that garage. When he'd be called on for the soldiers... And they used to, he used to ask my husband, "Do you want to drive the soldiers back to Camp Devens?" He'd give him five dollars a night to drive them back to Camp Devens. (S: Um) So he used to do that. And then when the entertainers started being sent down to Camp Devens they called on this Jitney, the touring cars you know, two cars.

S: Oh, so you met your husband while he was driving?

G: So he was one of the drivers.

**TAPE I ENDS**  
**TAPE II, SIDE A BEGINS**

S: Now you were the smallest one you said?

G: I was the smallest of the crowd. So they used to jam me between her, she was a big woman, and the driver. Because I could jam. So then it got so that every time the crowd was asked to go, the same crowd, they'd get the same drivers, and it got so everybody sat in the same seat all the time. (S: Umhm) So that's how I got to know him.

S: Yah. you just sat beside him and started talking.

G: Yah.

S: What about in Wigginville, do you remember (--) Donna has mentioned that you went down with your friends down to the boarding houses to play the mandolin? Ah some, a friend's uncle or some thing played, or (--) Where was that, on Suffolk Street?

G: Oh! Yah. I had friends (--) My father and I used (--) Our relatives lived out in Dracut. They went to the Hillside Church in Dracut. And every fall they use to have these famous suppers. So my cousin use to come down. He'd come down to our house.

They wanted entertainers. So they come down one time to see if my father and me would go up and put on, and entertain you know. (S: Umhm) So every time they always called on us to go up there to entertain at their suppers. So there was a girl who went to that church. And her father was an overseer in one of the mills, cotton mill down there. And he lived in, not her father, her Uncle. He lived in one of the Corporation houses way down at the end of Suffolk Street right close to the mill. He lived in one of them. He had up and downstairs there. And she was quite a socialist. She liked to put on parties. And she'd get a group together and have them come down to her place. And she'd have parties you know? (S: Umhm) Young people, and she'd always ask me to come. "Now bring your mandolin," you know. So, and she played the piano. So of course I'd play the mandolin and she'd play the piano, and we'd, the crowd would sing around. And then she'd have, her Aunt would put on a little lunch you know, for us.

S: Umhm. What would she serve you for lunch?

G: Oh little cakes you know? And I suppose it was tea, I don't remember. [Laughs] It's been so long.

S: Now this was in a Corporation House?

G: A corporation.

S: What were they like inside?

G: Huh?

S: What were the Corporation houses like inside?

G: Well that's the only one I was ever really ever in. There was three rooms, a front, three rooms there and the bedrooms upstairs. I never got upstairs. And just one little toilet, no baths. They had a toilet in there. But (--)

S: This is when you were a teenager you did this?

G: Yah.

S: Yah. Now were there any boarding houses down in that area?

G: Oh they were all boarding houses. All along Suffolk Street and down there. A lot of them have been torn down. But they were all boarding houses where the girls who worked in the mill use to board there.

S: Oh! Did you ever go in any of those?

G: I was only in once with a chum of mine, she played the mandolin too. And we were kids in school. And her mother knew one of the woman that run a boarding house. And

they took us down one day to visit, one Sunday afternoon to visit her. And we visited in their parlor, you know, and played the mandolin there for her, and a couple other girls that were there. But I never went upstairs and saw how they slept or anything. But I understand that they're probably four to a room, you know? Two to a bed and that's the way it was.

S: What about, did you have parades and things like that? Like (--)

G: Oh yah! Every Fourth of July there use to be a parade, and every part of the city would have a crowd in. And they'd have, oh clubs, you know. They'd, and they'd dress up silly, and clowns. And then we had quite a bunch from Wigginville. They called them the "Wigginville Terrors." Something like that, "Rascals." That was their banner. but they'd dress up in crazy clothes, rags, you know?

S: Just for fun.

G: Yah. And they'd have a band. Any band that was in the city at the time. And all of us would get together and have a parade every Fourth of July morning.

S: Were you ever in the parade?

G: No I was never. But I can remember my father and mother taking us Fourth of July morning down onto Gorham Street watching the parade. And after the parade was over then we'd go down on the corner. That's where the Bishop Markham Housing is down (--)

S: This is the South Common? No.

G: Yah, the South Common.

S: South Common. Yah.

G: And they'd have a midway you know, and everything,

S: What was in the midway then?

G: Oh there were horses. The flying horses and the (--). Oh ah, hit the ball, the baseball, and try and knock down a dummy, or something and you'd get a prize and all. And there was a chocolate, a chocolate stand there. Man use to sell five pound boxes of chocolate. And you buy (--). He's go around, somebody would go around selling tickets for a nickel, you know? And after they got so many tickets sold, they put them in a hat and they pulled out a number. And if they pulled your number, you got the big box of chocolates. And ah, hotdog stands and things like that, and then at night they'd have fireworks.

S: Uh huh. Right on the common they would have the fireworks?

G: Yah, up on the hill, the hill along Highland Street there.

S: Umhm. What other kind of (--)

G: That's when we were kids, you know?

S: Yah.

G: Of course later on after the high schools then always had the Field Day Parade.

S: Oh they did?

G: You know.

S: When was that?

G: That would be in May, sometime in May.

S: Uh huh.

G: And they had, the Girl Officers High school, they had an organization called, I guess they have them today, yah. (S: Umhm) The Girl Officers. And the girls had to train with gymnasium and calisthenics, and they were picked for officers. And they use to train, each officer had a class, and in the high school they had to take these calisthenics exercises you know?

S: Umhm.

G: And each officer would train a class. Well the Girl Officers used to march with there class. And the boys use to march with uniforms and guns over their shoulders you know?

S: Now a Field Day Parade you say, what was the purpose of it, or what was the Field Day?

G: Well they'd go up on the common and they'd perform different, oh different exercises you know, that they had learned in calisthenics in high school. And ah, I can remember once, we were down watching the parade, and when the boys came through, when the boys came through marching by, you know, and I was looking to see where my son was. He was in (--) And I spotted him and his company. And he was way over the other side. And I hollered, "Hey Sonny!" He never looked at me. (S: Laughs) Never knew. And so I said to my daughter, "The stinker." I said, "He never even noticed me." She said, "Well now Ma, what did you expect him to do, when you're yelling that at him. What did you expect him, to recognize that?" [Laughs] I had, my girls, three of my girls were all Girl Officers. The pictures are in there.

S: Really? (G: Yah) Isn't that something. Now how long did that last? Or do they still have those parades?

G: Oh they still have.

S: They do?

G: Yah, they still have them.

S: Now did they have any kind of Christmas festivities around the city, or anything special?

G: Well of course they always decorated the city. They do today you know?

S: Umhm.

G: No. None that I ever took part in.

S: Yah. You said you went to Butler School?

G: Butler School.

S: Uh huh. What was school like in those days? Did you have (--) Was it a big building with a lot of grades in it?

G: Oh yah.

S: Like what grade to what grade? Like first through (--)

G: Well from the fourth grade up to the eighth,

S: Oh I see.

G: On [Carter] Street was what they called the primary school, from the first, second and third grade. And then you go to the Butler for the fourth up until the eighth grade. So I went through the Butler. When I graduated I was a salutatorian.

S: You were?

G: Yha.

S: That's terrific

G. And ah

S: And did your teachers try and encourage you to go on further in school?

G: Well yes they did, but that was when, as I say (--)

S: It was hard.

G: Times were hard and I went to work in the mill.

S: Yah.

G: But then I went to evening high school.

S: You did?

G: I went for, they had, down Lowell High they had classes in typing, book keeping and different you know, down there. So I signed up there and went for three years, four nights a week, for three years. Work in the mill all day. Come home at six o'clock. Grab my supper, change my clothes and walk from the Butler, well near Moore Street all the way down Gorham Street to the high school here, which is the annex now you know.

S: Right.

G: And for school at seven thirty. Seven o'clock until nine o'clock, and then walk back home again.

S: And did you play your mandolin at the same time on different evenings?

G: No that was before.

S: Oh that was before you went out.

G: Well that's before I joined the orchestra, yes.

S: Oh I see.

G: Because I was only (--). I was, I graduated from, in March and I would have been eighteen in May.

S: Oh.

G: So that's where (--)

S: So you went to school at night to finish up your high school diploma. What did they teach you in school in those days? I mean was it about the same as now, or you think it's different?

G: Well of course I learned the basic of book keeping, that is debit, credit, journal and trail balance, and that stuff you know?

S: Umhm.

G: Well I never put it to practical use because I went to work in the mill. Then when my husband started working for himself, he had to have some way to keep his records. And I said, well gee you know, maybe I could figure out a way, remembering what I had learnt. And I went down city and bought some paper, book of journal and so forth, and come home and set up a little bit of a system. So I could keep track of the money. Held bring me home his slips and I keep track of it that way. Well it grew and gradually he grew a little bigger you know, and got help. Well I did start [unclear].

S: So you were always really busy huh?

G: Well I never had time to join a social club. I never had time.

S: That's incredible.

G: I was on the go all the time.

S: Were the teachers real strict in those days?

G: Oh very, very. The kids were different too.

S: They were? How?

G: Well they weren't rambunctious. The teacher could teach the children without having somebody you know, being fresh and disrupting the class, you know? But of course they were strict. You had to tow the mark. They had a principal there, [God] Callahan they called him. He was principal there for years. He was a great big burly man. And held go around, we had a recess. And then when you had to file in line at the end of recess, when the bell would ring, in the basement. And held go down and you have to stay two by two to march upstairs into your class again. He always had a great big [unclear] up his sleeve. (S: Uh!) And anyone who got out of line, he just pull that down. You got it on your knuckle and put it back up his sleeve again. So they had to tow the line.

S: Did you have to wear any special kind of clothes to school? Any?

G: No, just (--) No, no.

S: Neat and clean.

G: My mother made them all.

S: Your mother made all of your clothes?



G: Oh yah. Now I make all mine.

S: You do?

G: I learned from her. And all my life I made my clothes.

S: Wow! Did you make all your children's clothes and all too?

G: Yah.

S: That's incredible. You save a lot of money huh?

G: The only way I saved my house. Times were hard. I couldn't go out, afford to go out and buy everything.

S: That's something. What did you play at recess when you were little in school?

G: Oh, some of them played hopscotch or tag, or (--)

S: Same sort of thing (G: yah) they do now. Well you said you went to work when you were fourteen years old and you worked at that place for how long?

G: Fourteen years, till I was twenty-eight.

S: At the same mill and you just took on different jobs? You had (G: Well I, you know) what you already described.

G: Yah.

S: And did you do anything else besides those two jobs in Lowell?

G: Well there were other little things in the cloth room, when the cloth would come down off the looms. (S: Uh huh) And they had to be examined for knots and imperfections in it. And when there was slack here you know, the bosses, instead of laying me off he'd give me a job there to hold on to me, because there weren't many drawer-ins. Many couldn't drawer-in, you see. So he use to keep me doing other jobs in the cloth room. And then if he needed, the work come in here, held take me off and put me on here again.

S: Did you have the same boss all those years?

G: Yah, yah.

S: And was he French or English, or you don't know?

G: English.

S: He was English.

G: An English white haired.

S: Were most of the bosses English do you think?

G: What do you mean?

S: In the mill? I mean did they let the French be bosses or anything?

G: Oh they were mixed up.

S: It was all mixed?

G: Yah.

S: And everybody got along pretty good?

G: Yah. French and yah.

S: Yah. Were the mills clean inside?

G: Well what mill is clean? You know what I mean? Really.

S: No I don't. Well (--)

G: Not the way they are today.

S: Yah.

G: Kids today wouldn't go inside of a mill I worked in

S: Why is that?

G: Oh, they wouldn't belittle themselves to work in a mill. Work in the mill? Well the work was dirty. You get your hands dirty and everything. And I use to have an old apron I'd put on over everything, you know. And I'd go in in the morning, you had to grease your hands with oil to make those things work.

S: Oh you did?

G: And your hands would be (--) You'd have to work dirty. But all the mills were.

S: That didn't dirty the thread when you past it up? Or they wash that afterwards? You know when you pass the thread through the heddles and your hands were greasy then?

G: Well we had our... Our hands were greasy to work those heddles, (S: Oh, okay) you know, when they stick together. (S: Oh, I see) Then when we'd go home, we'd go for lunch, we'd go in the washroom and wash up, and have your own soap and towel and go in the big long sink there. Six or eight faucets and six or eight wash pans. And go and wash up you know, and then go and eat your lunch. And go wash up again before you go home.

S: Where did you eat your lunch? You brought your lunch to work with you?

G: My mother use to send our hot dinners down there, believe it or not.

S: Really! Now who brought the hot dinners down?

G: Two dinner pails. (S: Umhm) And she had a girl, a girl that went to school in Wigginvile there. And a lot of the people would, they'd have a dinner carriage they called them. And she'd come. My mother got her to come and carry dinners down to the mill. And she always had, the bottom part of this pan was hot coffee and then she'd have potatoes and vegetables and whatever, meat cakes or whatever meat she had. And then the top would be a piece of pie or some cake or something in each one. And she'd have enough for my... One of my sisters worked in the mill with me and the other one worked in the Bunting. Well she used to come over from the Bunting to where we were. And my father, there was dinner for four. (S: Oh!) And this girl use to carry the dinners down to us. And when we had our dinner, you know, we had plates and knives and forks and cups there. After we got through, I'd go down in the washroom and wash the dishes and stack them up again till the next day.

S: Hm. So you kept your dishes at work? (G: Yah) Now I heard stories. Did some people heat their lunches from the hot water in the sinks, or something, or did you ever see that?

G: No.

S: No? Nothing like that?

G: No, but I guess they use to have (--) Well I know of someone who use to bring their hot coffee, but they had it all wrapped up in a cloth or something and would drink it as it was when it come noontime. You know a lot of them (--) That's the way we did, but a lot of the others that had to come a long ways from work, they use to carry their dinner. And the looms would stop at twelve for one hour and people would eat their lunch, you know? And they'd, I don't remember whether it was back in bottles then or not. But they'd eat their sandwich or whatever they had for lunch, you know? And then be ready when the bell would ring, be ready to start up at one o'clock again till five thirty.

S: Was the room clean that you were in? That you worked in? Or was it a dirty room?

G: Well it was(--) Well the floor was oily, you know, but of course they had floor sweepers everyday you know, that swept up the dirt and refuge around. Kept it swept you know?

S: Yah. So you never saw anything like rats or anything like that in the loom?

G: No, but we used to see cockroaches.

S: Did you?

G: Yah.

S: They're pretty bad huh?

G: They were in the mill. People never took any notice of them. They were crawling.  
[Mental Peggy sent you to them]

S: Really! And was it noisy working at your job?

G: Oh terrible!

S: It was?

G: Oh you know those looms, when they start up you couldn't hear yourself talk. You wanted to talk to someone, you had to get right up and (makes sounds) holler.

S: Really!

G: You want to talk to anyone, you had to holler.

S: Did that scare you when you first came in to work to hear that noise?

G: I suppose it did, but I had to get use to it like everybody did.

S: Yah. Hm. So you never had any trouble with your boss? You always got along pretty good?

G: With who?

S: With your bosses?

G: Bosses? Oh yah!

S: They were all pretty nice people?

G: Yah! If you did your work right you didn't have any trouble.

S: Umhm. Now did you work in the mills when they had the 1912 strike? Do you remember that?

G: I don't remember that.

S: That was before World War I.

G: I could have been.

S: Ya. How about the one, do you remember, there was one also right around World War I when they had a strike. Do you remember anything about strikes in Lowell?

G: I wouldn't remember that. Maybe I did as a kid. My father might have been. They've been (--) I think I vaguely remember the mills being on strike.

S: Yah.

G: Yah. I was pretty young then. I vaguely remember that. And ah, we were up in Dracut then and my father couldn't get work. And he and a couple of other men, they had bicycles. And they use to ride all the way in Lawrence, to the mill in Lawrence to find work and then back on bicycles, just to get a couple of dollars until the strike, you know, until it was over.

S: Until the strike was over just to feed his family huh?

G: Yah.

S: Gee that's incredible!

G: Oh if you tell those things to the young people today. I use to talk about them. My daughter, she lives out in California. And when she was visiting here one time, and we we're sitting here with my other daughter talking about things we didn't have years ago that we have today. And I remember one of them saying, "My God we ought to have a tape recorder," you know? [Unclear] I talked to her last night. She just got home from Hawaii. And she sent me some flowers from there. And I called her to thank her. And I said, "You know I'm going to have an interview," you know. Well I told her, well before she went to Hawaii I was laughing about it you know, thinking it's a big joke someone would call me. And she said, "Well Ma, you get a pencil and paper out and you write own everything that you think of and don't forget it." [Laughs]  
So last night she says, "Where's the tape recorder I gave you? You ought to record all this stuff that your," you know, so I could send it out to her, you know? (S: Umhm) I said, "Well I don't know how they're going to do it. I don't know whether they can record

those things. Maybe I could get them good enough to make a copy of it. Maybe I could buy it from them." You know what I mean? You know, if they're willing to sell it.

S: I can check for you.

G: Huh?

S: I can check for you and see. (G: Huh?) I can check for you and see. Now what was the other thing I was going to ask? Oh! You were talking about during World War I that you entertained the troops and everything. Did anybody in your family have to go overseas?

G: No. No. My husband couldn't go because he had hurt his knee in the coal mine when he was younger.

S: In Peoria, yah.

G: And his knee wouldn't stay out of, would every once in awhile it would go out of joint. And he'd have to stop and twist his bottom leg and set the knee back in place again. So they wouldn't take him because of that. He always felt it too. Because, you know, felt as though he was skirting, (S: Ah) you know, because he wasn't able to go. But ah, my own children, my son got to be a Aviator. He got his Wings down in Pensacola, Florida. But he just got his Wings when the war was over. They were getting ready to send him across, (S: Ah) as a fighter pilot.

S: Now this was World War II?

G: Yah. Ah, when the war was over. And then they just dismissed all the pilots and he came back home. But he always kept it up. But now he teaches flying up at Tewksbury Flying Airport out there.

S: Oh he does?

G: Night flying. And he has several, a number of pupils. He goes out two nights a week and Saturdays and Sundays. He gives lessons.

S: So World War I didn't really affect you in anyway?

G: Affect what?

S: Affect you and how your family lived. I mean, you didn't have any rationing or anything like that during the war?

G: Oh yes! We couldn't get sugar.

S: You couldn't?

G: No. You had to have sugar stamps and you had to have stamps for this and that. And ah, you had to go down to City Hall and lie like heck about what you wanted the sugar for. (S: laughs) If you want to can anything, tell them you want to can so many jars of this and so many jars. You know dang well you don't do it. But if you canned, said you were going to can this and that to preserve it, well then you were allowed a certificate for five pounds of sugar for so many cans of preserves. (S: Hm) That's when I (--) That's when saccharin came into Lowell. And you couldn't buy sugar you know, it was just so scarce. So we started using saccharin, getting saccharin tablets for your coffee. You know, instead of the sugar, to save on it. Yes there was lots of rationing then. Of course in World War II they cut off everything.

S: They did?

G: They cut off, well manufacturing everything. They stopped making sewing machines. They stopped manufacturing automobiles, and they stopped oh, all kinds of things. Everything went to manufacture war materials or some sort of other. Everything went into the war effort. You actually had a lot of restrictions then. Like I can remember my husband's mother use to make special Christmas cookies, flavored with anise. And she use to send them on to us when the kids were small. And when my son was in the service, he use to love them. Christmas wasn't Christmas without Granny's cookies. (S: Laughs) And ah, she wanted, said she'd like to send some to him. I asked her to send some. I wrote. And she said, well she, "If I could get a sugar stamp she'd make the cookies." So I had to maneuver to get a five pound bag stamp and mail it out to her so she could make the cookies to send to my son, (S: Laughs) when he was in the service.

S: That's too much. So let's see, you worked until you got married? When did you get married? What year? Do you remember what year it was?

G: 1922.

S: Can you tell me about your wedding?

G: Well no special thing. A friend of his, my husband had worked with him, he was his best man. And he got another fellow, and he got a four passenger car and drove us to the (--) I was just married in the rectory at Sacred Heart Church. They didn't have big weddings, church weddings then like they do now. You had to be the Mayor's daughter or some big, big high (S: to afford that) society to have a church wedding. That was unusual.

S: Now did you get married in a white gown or?

G: Yah. I made my dress, white dress, white satin dress. And I made (--) My sister was a bridesmaid. She had pink chiffon. I made hers and her hat. And then my mother had a caterer come in and serve a buffet lunch, you know?

S: At your house afterwards?

G: At the house.

S: Now did you have a honeymoon, or you went right (--)

G: Yah! Well we went out to Peoria.

S: Oh you did?

G: Yah. A friend loaned him his car and we drove then, took five, six days.

S: That must have been exciting. Was that your first time out of Lowell?

G: Yah.

S: It was.

G: Peoria to visit his folks out there.

S: What do you remember about that trip? Anything that stands out in your mind?

G: Well there were no highways as there are today. And we had got a manual from the automobile people or something. And you'd read it. So many miles on this road, on this street, and jog so far, so many feet. And then take this road and you go so many miles until you come to the next town. And then go, you had to read the book all the way through to (--)

S: Did you have many breakdowns?

G: No. He was a mechanic and he could take care of everything.

S: Yah, oh that's right. So you were lucky. Oh that was nice. What did you do at night? Did you stay in some sort of motel kind of place, or hotel?

G: Yah, someplace along the road we happened to be at. (S: Umhm) Well it was a motel or a place with rooms for rent, you know at lodges for travelers. You know?

S: Umhm.

G: Or we'd go through a city, sometimes we'd stop at a hotel.

S: Hm. That must have been something back in 1922?

G: Huh?



S: To go traveling during those times.

G: Yah.

S: Across the country. It was different from Lowell huh?

G: Oh!

S: What did you think of Peoria?

G: It was quite a big city, but a nice city, you know?

S: And then you stayed there for awhile?

G: We stayed two weeks you know, visiting and going around. And they had the old fashion country fairs. You know, where they had the cows and the pigs and the horses on exhibition, and cook food and all that kind of stuff, you know. And visiting his folks and getting to know the family.

S: So then you came back to Lowell and your husband went back to work?

G: Yah.

S: Now did you work?

**TAPE II, SIDE A ENDS**  
**TAPE II, SIDE B BEGINS**

G: There's a man in the next house to me, he was a boss in the Bunting Mill then. And he come to the door one day and he says, "Are you going to work anymore?" And I said, "No, I gave up work when I got married." He says, "Do you suppose you could come back for a week or two and help me out? I need some drawer-ins, a drawer-in, need help." And my mother said, "Go ahead You might just as well as hang around the house." (S: Umhm) So I went to work for him and I worked a year there.

S: Did you?

G: I ended up, he kept me a whole year.

S: Did your husband mind that you worked?

G: No, no, but we lived with my mother.

S: Was that hard living with your parents once you were married?

G: No, not bad. Because he (--)

S: Everybody got along pretty good?

G: Oh yah. Yah.

S: Yah.

G: And then he wanted to you know, build a house. So my mother said, "We were riding around town looking at different places. Different houses and things in Chelmsford and around." And my mother said, "Why don't you take a ride up on the hill." She says her brother, that's my Aunt, had bought that house. It was a new house. She says, "They just moved in awhile ago. Why don't you go up and visit them?" So we took this ride you know, this Sunday afternoon to visit my Aunt. And we got in there. We drove up here, he says, "That's the house I slept in the first night I came to Lowell," across the street. So all this land was vacant you know? Nothing here. So he says, "What do you say, what do you say if we buy that land, he says, and build?" Well that's what we did.

S: You did?

G: We bought this piece of land.

S: Do you remember how much he paid for it?

G: Four hundred and fifty dollars. It's fifty feet wide, a hundred and fifty feet deep, way up there.

S: Yah.

G: We bought that land and then he got (--)

S: That was what, about 1923, '24?

G: Ah, 1923. About 1924. About '24. So we had the house built. He, a fellow use to bring his car up at the garage was a contractor, built houses, and he talked to him about it and he showed him plans of things, you know. And he showed him the plans, and well we decided you know, we'd build a house. Well I saved money from playing in the orchestra, and he had a little. So we put it both together, a down payment to get a mortgage at the Cooperative Bank to build our house.

S: Hm. How much did it cost to build a house in those days?

G: About six thousand dollars. But they only had the skeleton, the basement and the outside built. And we had to have the (--) By law you had to have an electrician and a plumber put in the work. That was by law. So we had to have that done, pay that. And

my brother was an electrician and he did all the wiring in the house. And ah, from there everything was rough. We come in here, he painted. Nothing like it is now. Painted the walls and varnished the walls. Varnish the woodwork and varnish the floors. And painted, finished the whole inside ourselves, (S: Hm) or it would have cost more.

S: Yah. So how long did that take you to finish the insides?

G: Oh God. I know we were working on it for years. We always found something to change, you know.

S: [Laughs] That sounds familiar.

G: And then some years back we use to look in the magazines and they were coming out with these overhead cabinets you know. (S: Umhm) I said, "You know there's a lot of waste space going up there." I says, showing the pictures you know, and I (--) By God he gets the pencil and paper out and he started with the tape measure, and he drew up that whole design and built all those cabinets and up there.

S: Really. They're beautiful!

G: And then built our stove into it and the refrigerator into it, and built around it. And we were always building, always doing something else.

S: Something on to it. So that was the only time you worked when you were married?

G: That's the only (--) Until I was pregnant. I was gonna have a baby and I gave up then.

S: And how many children did you have?

G: I had seven.

S: Seven. Wow! When was your first child born? About what year, do you remember?

G: He's sixty-one now.

S: So that would be about 1925 or so?

G: Yah, 1925. 1925. I was thirty years old then.

S: So how about (--) You were raising your kids partly during the Depression, weren't you?

G: Oh yes!

S: So how did that affect you? I mean, was it hard, really hard?

G: You had to do a lot of pinching and saving.

S: You did. You didn't work though?

G: No no, no,

S: And your husband still had (--) Was he working at his own garage then? (G: Yah) Yah.

G: But trying to pay your house off and pay those things off. Of course the bills weren't big then, but he wasn't making much money then either. (S: Yah) But it was always a case of pinch, pinching and nicking and tucking and make both ends meet.

S: Yah. How long did that last for?

G: Oh Lord I don't know. Things gradually got better after awhile you know?

S: Yah. Did you remember seeing any beggers, or anything around Lowell?

G: Any what?

S: Beggers or anybody you know, that was really starving around Lowell?

G: Oh there use to be. [Repeats] There use to be, to come around asking for a sandwich.

S: And did you give them one?

G: Yes. My mother would say, "Never let them in the house." But I'd make up a couple of sandwiches and give it to him and held go. They'd go. (S: Hm) Yes, many a time.

S: Did you see many changes in Lowell then, as far as stores going out of business and all?

G: Of what?

S: Stores going out of business during Depression?

G: Well I don't remember that so much. They didn't have the big supermarkets and things that they have today, you know. There were no such thing as a supermarket (S: Ya) in those days.

S: So what did you do for shopping?

G: Well there use to be these little small community stores. Meat market and butch (--) Grocery store and meat market, you know, or a baker shop. Somebody would run a

baker shop, and you'd buy your stuff that way. Individual stores. They were alright until the supermarket started to come in. (S: Oh!) And they put the small Ma and Pa businesses out, you know.

S: When did they come in? Around World War II?

G: Oh gosh, I don't remember the years. I could remember back then, but don't ask me anything. [Both laugh] Don't ask me anything ten years ago.

S: So now the flood took place when in Lowell?

G: Huh?

S: When did the flood take place in Lowell? In the thirties?

G: The what?

S: The flood in Lowell?

G: Around 1936 or something like that. (S: Um) Yah, and it went over the bridge and way up.

S: Which bridge now, the Aiken Street?

G: Bridge Street, down here. It washed up the bridge, and the water came way up, all over Lakeview Avenue and way up to about Third Street. The water overflowed then. And they opened up the basement of the school, St. Michael's School for (--)

S: For people who were washed out?

G: For people to go in. And people cooked hot meals there. You know, until the flood went back. But all of Lakeview Avenue, all those houses were washed out. I wouldn't say washed out, they were half full of water. So many of a person said they'd never live on Lakeview Avenue again. So they moved higher up, you know?

S: And you didn't have any problem up here?

G: Oh I never had any problem here, no.

S: Yah. What caused the floor? Was it just that it rained for a long time?

G: Well, we had heavy, heavy snowstorms and then a sudden hot spell.

S: Oh. and it all melted.

G: And then the snow and the ice started to break up and come down from way up in New Hampshire down the river, you know?

S: Down the Merrimack, yah.

G: Yah down the (--) Ice flows and everything. And everything melted you know, and just overflowed the banks.

S: Now how long did that last, do you remember?

G: Oh well things were, a couple of months before they got straightened out. I mean eventually the water went back, but everything was (--) Well you know what a flood does? Everything had to be cleaned up and then they had a temporary bridge built. Foot bridge over, right parallel with the regular bridge. To go over, you had to go over (--) If you were coming down in the electric cars, you had to get off and go over the foot bridge and then get the electric cars again on the other side until they got the new bridge built.

S: Well I'm just trying to think. When you did your shopping, where did you go shopping from here? Where were the, you know, like the meat market and everything located?

G: Well there were markets down on Bridge Street. And there was one fellow, he had a fruit market and grocery store. And he used to come up every, one day a week and take an order from me. And then he'd bring it back later in the afternoon. Then there was a meat market and I could telephone in, or they'd call me and I could telephone what I want and they'd deliver it, you know.

S: Umhm. So you didn't even have to go out really?

G: No. you could have. They delivered in those days.

S: Did they have drugstores in those days back then?

G: Oh they would, on Bridge Street. Down on Bridge Street. There was one at the corner of Bridge, and there was one at the corner of Third. But the one on Bridge Street, I think that, I believe that got washed out. And he moved to the corner of Seventh Street. Murphy and Callahan Drug Store was there then. Then there was Plunkett's and Carr's, two more drugstores on Bridge Street. They're both gone now.

S: When you had your children, did you have them at home too?

G: No, I went to the hospital.

S: Which hospital did you go to?

G: The Lowell General.

S: Oh, okay. So by then people were going to the hospital?

G: People were starting to go, but when I was going to have my first one, of course my mother was kind of getting ready for, we'd have it at home. And there was a doctor who use to go to the garage to get his car fixed and told he him, you know. I was six months pregnant before I saw a doctor. He told him that I was going to have a baby. How far was I, and he told him. He said, "Oh my!" He says, "Bring her in, I'll see her." I spoke to the doctor about having (--) I said my mother was getting ready for me to have the baby at home. And he advised, he said "Don't. Don't do it." He says, "A first baby you never know what's going to happen." And he says, "It's better if she's in the hospital, you know, for the first one anyway." So that's why we gave up the idea of having the baby at home, and I had my first one up in the hospital. And he was my doctor for all of them after that.

S: When you had a baby in those days, how long did you stay in the hospital for?

G: Two weeks.

S: Two weeks.

G: Two weeks!

S: Wow!

G: That's the only vacation I had!

S: Wow, that's true, yah!

G: When you come home you had to dig in! [Both laugh] That's the only vacation we had, two weeks. Stay in bed for ten days. You couldn't put your foot on the floor for ten days before the doctor would let you get out of bed. Then the rest of, up to two weeks, you'd walk around the room. For two dollars a day. Fifty cents a day for the babies in the nursery.

S: You're kidding! Oh, that's incredible.

G: That's what it costs to have the babies then. That was sixty years ago. Sixty, fifty years ago. Because I was thirty when the first one was born, and I was forty-one when the seventh was born. (S: Hm) So I had seven in eleven years.

S: Wow! It must have changed a lot during that time huh?

G: Oh yah. So I'm sure glad I don't have to pay for babies today.

S: Yah! [Laughs] That's true.

G: You didn't get out in two or three days like you do today. Everybody put in a two week stay. And they talk about it now, two weeks! Well I said, "I was glad for two weeks, because that was the only vacation I got." When I got home I had to (--)

S: So your mother wasn't here when you got home to help you at all?

G: Yes, she always took care of the kids at the house. Then I'd come back home on my own.

S: Hm. Now how long did your mother and father live?

G: My mother was seventy-two, and he was seventy-four when he died. And they were, 1944 they died. So eighty-four, that's forty years. Forty-one years they're dead.

S: Hm. They both died in the same year huh?

G: Yah. Six months apart.

S: Huh, just like the grandparents?

G: Yup! She died in March and he died the following September. She died in my hearth, in my living room in there. She had pneumonia, and my sister and I use to go up. I'd go stay all night at her house to give her medicine. And my sister from Dracut, her husband would drive her up in the morning before he went to work, with her two kids and stay all day. Well then I'd give my people their meals here, and then my husband would drive me over and I'd stay all night with my mother. It got so I couldn't do it, you know. And I asked the doctor if he'd let me take her home. And I took her home. And he said yes, you can take care of her just as well at home. There was no talk about going to a hospital in those days. And so I took care of her here, and she died sitting up in my chair in my room. She couldn't lay down, she couldn't breathe. She just, pneumonia, you know?

S: And did you have her funeral here in the house?

G: Huh?

S: Was her funeral in the house?

G: No, they started to have funeral homes then.

S: Funeral homes then.

G: So she was in a funeral home out on Nesmith Street, in the funeral home there.



S: Oh. Um, World War II. I was going to ask you about a little bit. I guess the thing I want to know is, what are the changes you see in Lowell today compared with when (--)

G: With what?

S: From when you were a young girl, what, there's a lot of changes or?

G: In what way?

S: Well, even buildings. Are a lot of buildings torn down or (--)

G: Oh yes, sure. Like I remember up on Merrimack Street there was a hall they called Huntington Hall. They had a fire. They use to have all the social dances and everything there. A lot of the churches use to run their reunions there and things. And different clubs would run dances there. That was like kind of the focal point before the casino came in to view. And they had a fire that burnt that down and it never was rebuilt. And a place that was (--). They built the YMCA here in Lowell. Well that's where my husband roomed when he came to Lowell first. But now that's been torn down. That's at the corner of Dutton and Merrimack Street. And it's the entrance to the new (--)

S: Yah. I know. You're talking about (--).

G: The big wheel, (S: Umhm) well that's been torn town too. So (--)

S: There's a lot of changes. Your husband's garage is still in the same place?

G: No. First they had a garage on Appleton Street first. And an oil company wanted to buy him out. Haffner's wanted to put an oil station in there and he bought the land. Of course he only rented. So he bought the land. He had to move. And he moved to a place on Summer Street. And he had to run the business there for awhile, until the Bishop Markham Housing Project started to come in to vogue, and now everything was torn down all along Summer Street. And he had to move there. He was able to buy this little place on Perry Street; small garage you know. And then he moved to there and he's been there ever since.

S: Now your husband ?

G: Until he retired. And then the boys, they got interested in mechanics, and the two boys. After high school they use to go down to the garage to fool around you know, and get use to it, and run errands for the father and things like that. So they got so they started being interested in cars and learning the cars. And they worked then with the father. After my oldest son came back from the service and he went working with him. And then the other boy, the other [unclear] Joe, well he worked with him there, you know, until my husband (--). And he had a couple of other men working for him, with him, and until he was sixty-five. He was going to retire. So he sold out to the two boys. They decided to run the automobile repair business.

S: So then your husband just came home?

G: No he worked for them then.

S: Oh he worked for them? Oh. I see. And how long?

G: Well he worked for them until eleven years ago. He's dead ten years now, but he worked for them part-time you know?

S: Hm. So he worked a long time, didn't he? Now when you were married, after you got married, did you still play the mandolin at socials or (--)

G: Well I didn't play the mandolin then. I was playing a banjo.

S: Oh the banjo?

G: Yah.

S: Okay.

G: Well a little bit, but not so much. I didn't go around so much anymore. (S. Uh huh) You know.

S: And you don't do it, you don't play anymore?

G: Oh I gave that up quite a long while ago, but I couldn't play it anymore. I've got a bad finger here. It won't bend only so far. You've got to have that finger to press down on the strings. So in my mind I'm playing. I can play all the time.

S: Can you? [Laughs]

[Tape is turned off, then on again]

G: ...where they sold, and had the family picture taken. Well I made all those dresses.

S: I noticed (--) You made all of those dresses?

G: I made all those dresses.

S: Isn't that something! I noticed that you cut your hair then. Some of you have short hair.

G: Yah.

S: That was the style? Did your mother mind that?

G: Well, she didn't like it very well. It really wasn't cut. I use to turn it up into a bun.

S: Oh, I see.

G: Oh I didn't have my hair cut until I had four kids, and then I couldn't take care of it anymore. I had to go up with her to wash my hair and her mind the kids so I could wash my hair. Every time I got in to a stitch, there'd be a fight somewhere and someone would get hurt. So then that's the time when they were having the beauty parlors. And this one here, when she was older then, and she says, "Ma, why don't you get your hair cut." It took a long time before she got me talked into going down to get my hair cut. Finally got my hair cut. He gave me a bag that big of hair to take home.

S: Isn't that something. Oh I love these pictures here.

G: Yah. This is when they had the hundredth anniversary of the Butler School, two years ago. And I said to, telling my son you know, and he said, "Why don't you go down?" (S: Umhm) And I said, "Oh heck, why will I go down?" "Oh yah, it's interesting." "Oh I don't know." Well come Saturday morning and his wife come over and she said, "Do you want to go down? If you want to go down I'll take you." I says, "I feel silly." "No. Go ahead, we'll go in and look. If you don't, you know, if you don't like it we'll come out. So we got inside the door and there was a table set up with two teachers, you know, greeting everyone that came. So she said to my daughter-in-law, she said, "Were you a student here?" She says, "No, but my mother-in-law was here. She graduated in 1974." Oh my God, oh my God! She run down, way way down the hall. "We got a 1974!" [Laughs] So we went around and they took my picture sitting at the desk. The desk I had, you know. And there was a birthday cake. And there was another woman, she was a year later than me. And she had got in there early. And of course she was the oldest. And when I come, I knocked the pins out from under her because I was a year... [Laughs]

S: Oh, you stold her thunder huh?

G: So that's the two of us talking there, (S: Umhm) you know. And then when they were going to cut the cake, they wanted me to cut the cake. And when I saw her over there and I said, "Come on over and help me cut." "No, she said, it's alright, you go ahead." I said, "Come on!" I said, "That's too close to call!" I said, "Come on and help me cut the cake." So the teachers made her come, you know? So the two of us went over and cut the cake.

S: Isn't that something.

G: But that's the write up that was in the paper about the hundredth anniversary of (--). (S: Umhm) But these are all pictures that they dug up.

S: Oh these are wonderful pictures though.

G: Old pictures you know?

S: Now who's Sister Vincent?

G: No, that's me and my son, my first one.

S: Aah!

G: And that's me and my second, my daughter. She died six months ago.

S: Aah!

G: And that's my family (S: the whole family?) up in my mother's yard. My husband, me and (--)

S: Your husband was tall.

G: Huh?

S: Your husband was tall.

G: Yah.

S: Umhm

G: But that was my first three. November, and I had my fourth one in March after that. But they went around collecting all those pictures you know, for each one of them. There's my mother and father's golden wedding anniversary. Now these are my boys. This is Joe when he played in the band. The trumpet in the high school band. And that's them when they made their First Communion and so forth. And that's my daughter when she graduated from high school.

S: Who's that with her, your husband?

G: Huh?

S: Was that your husband with her?

G: That's my husband, yah. And that's the only (--). That's my baby that died. (S: Ooh!) He died when he was a baby. He was only about eight months old then.

S: He just took sick?

G: Hm. But this is my son when he went in the service. Was up in Waterville, Maine and we went up to visit him. These are pictures of my sister, the one that went away to

be a num, when we went to visit her. Then this is all my children's weddings, you know, (S: Um) each of their weddings. I make all her gowns.

S: You made all of those gowns?

G: All their gowns.

S: Wow!

G: And here's their children, you know?

S: You have a big family huh?

G: And my daughter's wedding, I made all those gowns. And here's out in our yard. We took a picture of the crowd out in the yard. And these are her children. Grandchildren, you know.

S: So you have great-grandchildren by now I bet you.

G: Yah. Twenty-four I have.

S: Wow!

G: And this is my son Joe when he got married. And this is at his wedding you know, and their first baby. The shower we had for them, and his family. And this is the one that's out in California when she got married, and her kids. And this other one, she's in North Attleboro, when she got married. That's her family now, and her son here is at the University of Lowell now. He's on the football team.

S: I think I've seen his picture?

G: Copley. Copley.

S: Yah.

G: My other daughter, when she got married, and her kids. And then there's the (--)

S: Everybody signed it.

G: Yah. Well then at the party (--) You know, why don't you bring that chair around here. How much time have you got?

S: Well it's up to you.

[Tape is turned off then on again]

G: Oh, I thought I was going to, my grandson's graduation party.

S: Oh, and then they surprised you.

G: He was graduating from Tuft's down in Boston. And my son said, "We're going to have a party for him, and the family and friends. So when I got inside, that was me coming in the door. You can tell (--)

S: How surprised you were huh?

G: And then here they were. And I said, "Oh you stinkers," you know. (S: Laughs)  
Well that's the hall, part of the stage, the platform.

S: How many people were there?

G: Over a hundred.

S: Oh my gosh!

G: All the neighbors and the kids and their chums.

S: Isn't that pretty.

G: That's the cake my daughter made.

S: Your daughter made that?

G: Mmm.

S: Isn't that something.

G: The one that died last May. Well then my other daughter's husband, he was the Master of Ceremonies. And he put on, what do you call this? "This is your life!" (S: Laughs)

S: Did they record that? Did they have a tape recording of that?

G: Well they had, yah, they had movies of it.

S: Oh they did?

G: They have it on movies now. So he started out introducing (--)

S: And this was two years ago?

G: Yah.

S: You don't look that old. My gosh! I never would have guessed.

G: And ah, introducing all my kids from the youngest one first, you know? (S: Umhm) The first one, then her children, brought them up on the stage. Well then, when they come to my daughter out in California, he said ah, "Well I know your next one is Lil out in California." "Ya." "Would you like to talk to her on the telephone?" I said, "Well sure." So he said, "Well I think I have the number here." And he started to dial then you know? And ah, they got me talking to somebody on the telephone, "Her." And well, she said "You're having a party." I said, "How did you know there was a party?" Oh I got my ways of knowing. And we had quite a conversation. "Would you like to talk to Stan," her husband? "Yes." So I talked to some fellow. And then I wasn't hearing things very good and I said to him, "There's something the matter with the connection, I'm not getting by." "So he said, well let me see." And he held it and he said, "I think they disconnected." Well he said, "Maybe you'd like to see her in person?" And all the time here she come walking up from behind the bar. (S: Laughs) It was her talking down. She come walking from behind the bar up to the (--) They had got her from California and I didn't know it.

S: Isn't that something.

G: And each one of them they brought up with their family, you know? (S: Umhm) And then she said, he said, "You know, you have a lot of admirers over the years." And he said, "We have one especially that I know you'll be glad to see." And she said, "This is Nicki your milkman." Well he use to deliver milk here for years. And they called, you know. He goes over to the garage and he said to my son, asking for me all the time. And he told him, "We're going to have a party would you like (--)" "Sure I want to come." So that's when they brought him down. And I said, you know when he come down and you could see it on the movies you know, it's just like this is the Price is Right. (S: Laughs) "Come on down!" You know, you could see him going through the crowd, you now, running down. It was so funny. And then they gave me a medal. She went down to someplace in Rhode Island and got a silver dollar the year that I was born. And they put it, made a medal out of it. And that's my son there. So that's the end. That's him now, and me. That was the last of it.

S: Um. Now he's the one who runs the garage now?

G: Yah.

S: Isn't that something.

G: Oh, I think that's the write up about the Butler School.

S: Umhm.

**Tape II, side B ends**

**Tape III, side A begins**

S: Now can you just tell me about that again?

G: Instead of running a Minstrel Show, they said, "Well let's do something different." And they decided they'd have a cabaret. (S: Umhm) So they decided on four tables on the stage, with big tablecloths on them.

S: Now where was this held?

G: This was in Billerica, North Billerica.

S: Okay

G: And the girl that worked in the mill in North Billerica were doing this.

S: Oh I see.

G: So they had got the girls altogether and they decided well half of them were going to dress in men's dress, you know?

S: Oh so these are men? I mean these are girls?

G: Yah, and those are wigs. They're girls see. So eight of the girls, yah eight of the girls are wearing gowns and the other eight were in men's outfits, see. And they were escorting the girls to the diner, the cabaret. And then they had another one dressed up like this as a waiter with a towel over his arm, that went around pouring out what was suppose to be wine, you know? And there was glasses and things on the table. And then there was another one of the group and she was a pianist. Then they had another which was Master of Ceremonies. And then she'd call on different ones that could do something sitting at the tables. And they'd get up and come out and do something. Well I was there then. And I was dressed up. I didn't belong to that crowd, but that was an orange accordion pleated outfit with spangles, as a Spanish dancer. And they called me up. Oh I don't know how I got in there. Jee whiz. But I came out and did a Spanish dance with a tambourine. (S: Umhm) But when I first come out, I was heard playing on the outskirts with my mandolin, "Hearts and Flowers." And then they stopped and wanted to know who was that playing? What was that music? And somebody went out, was suppose to go outside to see who it was. Well they brought in me, I was dressed in rags. So they set me down on a stool or something and had me play the mandolin. So of course I went off and the other half of the show I came in as a Spanish dancer with a tambourine. So I did my dance around with a tambourine and then they planked me up on top of the piano for the rest of the show. So all the girls, there were singers and group singing, you know. They'd (--). Group singing and everything. They put a whole show on. Well then that was the (--) There was nothing like that before and that made the biggest hit.

S: Did it really?



G: You know, and they, at that time.

S: Now what date was this about nineteen what?

G: [Long pause] I'd say I was about eighteen. Oh about 1970 or so.

S: Hm. And this was held in North Billerica in what, a social hall, or right in the mill?

G: Well, no, not in the mill. You go down way by the mills there and there was a hall there called the Matthew's (Temperance?) Hall. And they use to (--) Every Friday night there'd be a dance out there. Some organization in Lowell would be running a dance. And I use to go out, my chums lived out there. And I'd get the electric car and go out and meet them and go to the dance with them.

S: When you say electric car, do you mean one of these? Or do you mean a regular car that was electric?

G: Well like that.

S: Oh, a trolley like that?

G: Yah.

S: Yah.

G: Not as big as that though. At that time there were smaller cars. Some of them were closed you know? A closed car with just benches the whole way long, you know?

S: Umhm.

G: Not like busses sitting, you're riding facewards. You rode sideways, this way.

S: Oh I see.

G: And then there'd be a bar on top with straps. And if there was no seat here, you held on to a strap, you know? [Laughs]

S: Huh. So that made a big hit. Then did a lot of people start doing that?

G: Oh well, after awhile something like that came up again later on at some other point, in another form, but we were the first ones to put that on. It was something different.

S: You should have been in show businesses, huh? [Laughs] And then see now these are the kinds of pictures they'd love to see.

G: Well that's ah, the Ecklund Sisters they were known as. That's when we use to go down to Camp Devens and entertain the soldiers. I remember one time they called on us to go and said, "We'll furnish transportation." "Alright, well we'll meet you on Paige Street." So we got down there and all the entertainers were there on Paige Street. And the first thing that pulled up was a big, two army trucks. You know the kind of trucks the soldiers ride, had driven around in?

S: Umhm.

G: With benches along (S: right) and benches down the middle.

S: Uh huh.

G: Well they stood and looked, oh! Well then they had step ladders. So we all piled in the army trucks you know, and that drove us down to Camp Devens. (S: Laughs) Well we had a lot of fun because it was a joke, you know? (S: Yah) Well we come home and of course we got in the same trucks coming home. Well one truck left ahead of us. And the one that we were in (--) If you're going to ride out Ayer a ways and then you take a left turn to go towards Littleton.

S: Umhm.

G: Well this driver didn't know where he was going, and he didn't make the turn. So we kept riding, and riding, and riding. So pretty soon one of the fellows opened the curtain and he said, "You're almost home huh?" He said, "Where are we?" The fellow says, "I don't know." "Well they got out you know, but where are we?" "Well we're out in the wilderness somewhere, no signs, no houses, no nothing." Well there were houses, but everybody was in bed. This was after twelve o'clock. So he kept riding. "Well what'll we do?" "Well he said, I must have missed that rode. Must be five miles or more back. Will we go back or we go on further and find (--) Well they voted to go on further. Well they went on further, and finally after it seemed like such a length of time, they come into a town. And they finally saw a policeman on his beat. So they stopped and wanted to know, "Where were we?" "You're in Lexington." (S: Laughs) This is two o'clock in the morning. And well how are we going to get back to Lowell? Well he directed them. Then we came back through Wilmington and Billerica. Well the trucks took all the girls home, you know, and my mother was frantic. When we didn't get home at a certain hour she sat watching and watching, and the next thing you know, this big army truck pulled up in front of the house and the two soldiers jumped out of it. She nearly died. And put a ladder up in the back of the truck and out come the three of us, you know?

S: Oh.

G: Well when we got in there she was just about ready to collapse. What happened? She could see us in a hospital you know? (S: Yah)

G: I said, "Well hold on, he lost the way, we went way down to (--)" We didn't get home till two-thirty in the morning. So some funny things use to happen then. (S: Yah) Well that's a family picture out in front of mother's home on a Thanksgiving Day. My brothers and sisters and their kids. My husband and Joe, me and my oldest son and my daughter. I only had the three of them then.

S: Um. Do you remember Prohibition?

G: Oh yah. My father use to make home brew.

S: Oh he did? Where?

G: [Unclear]! In the bathroom!

S: [Laughs] What a place to make it.

G: Oh, he had a great big crock, that big. And he'd boil it on Sunday morning. The hops and all this kind, and [unclear] he'd put in it. My mother use to have a fit, because he'd open the windows and you could smell it all over Wigginville, you know?

S: You could? [Laughs]

G: And then of course the brew had to (--). He had on a big board across the bathtub you know. (S: Umhm) And put his big tank up on there with all the stuff in it and a flannel cloth over it. And it had to work for a week or so, several days. (S: Umhm) And then it was time to bottle it. We all had to go on the line. That's my sister and me and my mother. Well he had to cipher you know? You'd have to hand him in the bottle and he'd cipher and he'd start filling the bottle. And he'd hand it to me, and I'd hand it to my sister and she'd hand it to my mother and my mother would have to cork it, you know? So one day, he wasn't getting it fast enough and he started to tilt the tub a little bit you know. (S: Umhm) And my mother says, "You know you're going to, that's going to dump over if you don't look out." She said, "and you'll swear your life away." And he said, "Ah, I know what I'm doing." And he didn't get the words out of his mouth till the board slipped and down went the tank of home brew all down the bathtub. Down his sleeves and down his pants. Well my sister, she took a fit of laughing, and she ran upstairs. And I tried to keep sober. My mother says, "I told you so. I told you, you'd swear your life away if you (--)" You know. And ah, well he was pretty sober. He didn't say much. Couldn't do anything. Home brew was running all down the bathtub. So he said ah. (--). After awhile I couldn't stand anymore and I went upstairs. And my sister was with her head buried in a pillow laughing. And then of course I started laughing. I don't know how long we stayed there, until finally he came up and changed his clothes. My mother said, he came down, he says, "They're having a hell of a laugh on me." [Both laugh] But oh that was our job on Wednesday night. And we were hustling and hustling because my fellow was coming Wednesday night and my sister's boy was coming. We had to hurry up and get the home brew all bottled before the fellows come. Well you know, it was going (--).

S: Now was this home brew only for your family?

G: Yah. Yah.

S: Or did you let, did outsiders know that (--)

G: Oh no, no, no.

S: You didn't let people know?

G: No, no. If we had any visitors come in, he'd give them a drink of beer, you know? Until it was gone.

S: Do you think a lot of people did that?

G: A lot of them did it. Yah! They use to make wine too. My mother made wine.

S: Oh your mother did?

G: Yah. She had a crock about that big. She use to mix grape juice, cracked wheat, sugar, yeast, I don't know what else anyway. And that use to ferment.

S: Umhm.

G: And then she'd ciphene it into tonic bottles. And it's delicious wine, grape juice wine.

S: Hm. Now did she only do that during Prohibition or all (--)

G: Oh yah! Everybody did. Everybody. You hear people talking and everybody had a different recipe. The men were giving out recipes in those days.

S: [Laughs] They were trading recipes huh? Did you ever have, what do they call them, a Revenue Agent come by?

G: Oh no.

S: No, you never were (--)

G: No. We could have if anyone wanted to tell on us I suppose. [Laughs] But everybody was doing it then, making home brew at home.

S: They were.

G: Yah. I wouldn't say everybody, but everybody that wanted the beer and couldn't get it, you know, they'd make their own.

S: Now how old were you before your parents let you drink? Have a drink?

G: Oh I don't know. I was never a drinker. I must have been a good twenty, twenty-five years old before I ever touched my first drink of (S: Oh. so yah) wine socially outside or over. We never drank. Only we had that little few bottles of wine there once in awhile. We had company, take it out and give a little drink of wine or something like that.

S: So it was mostly the men who had something to drink in those days?

G: The men had the beer. (S: Yah) Well that's the way it was! [Laughs] A lot of funny things went on in those days. (S: Um!) I was just reading in the paper last Sunday about this man in Billerica talking about the first, recalling the first armistice.

S: Uh huh. Oh, from World War I.

G: From Billerica. He used to have a big write up there about it. Well I remember the first armistice. My mother was down getting the breakfast. About six-thirty in the morning she hollered up, she says, "The war is over!" All the bells, the fire bells and bells, anyone that had bells, church bells were ringing, and ringing, and ringing. So we got up, got breakfast and went down to work. So everybody had been on their way to work then. And they got into the mills and every place. Nobody worked. They shut the mills down. Every place was shut down. So everybody started out. They walked down Lawrence Street, down Wamesit Street, down Central, down Merrimack, way up Merrimack Street. And they were crowded just like sardines in the middle of (--) No cars could run or anything. (S: Hm!) Running, shouting, hooraying and all this. And the one that was with me, and I couldn't, I never said a word. She said, "What's the matter with you? Ain't you glad the war is over?" And I said, "Yah." She said, "where's your, where is your (--) I said, "I'm so damn cold I can't speak." It was the coldest day, awfullest day. Well when we got through parading down Merrimack Street and come back, then of course no cars were running. I had to walk all the way from Merrimack Street way out to Wigginville. I was never so cold in my whole life. That I remember. That's the first armistice day I remember.

S: Hm. A lot of memories huh? (G: Oh yah) You're lucky you have a big family.

G: Well I had seven and six that are all married now, they've got families of their own.

S: They all live in the Lowell area?

G: Well one's out in ah, (S: Oh California) in California now. She married (--) She went to work down in Williamsburg, Virginia, and in an Army, in an Army Camp. Not camp, but a place where they manufacture war instruments, you know?

S: Uh huh.

G: And she worked in the office down there, and that's where she met the fellow that she married. And he was from California, and he had been overseas. He was at the foot of the hill when they planted the flag at Hiroshima, if you've seen that?

S: Yes, the statue of that.

G: He went in right from high school, eighteen years old. He says, "Well I didn't plant the flag, but I was at the foot of the hill when they did."

S: That must have been something to live through that?

G: So then he came back and he worked in Virginia, or Yorktown for quite awhile. And then he was being transferred out to the West Coast. So they got married down there and when he went out she went out there with him, you know, and she settled in California from then on. So they just come back, she and her husband from (--) Oh he had been sent over to Hawaii then, and they just come back a couple of days ago, after she and her husband and another couple went over to see what the place looked like now after twenty-five years. And she said, "Oh you'd never know it, you know?" It's gotten so commercialized. Nothing but high rise hotels and everything. You couldn't walk around like you did twenty-five years ago.

S: No. Huh.

G: This is my mother and father on their golden wedding anniversary.

S: That's something. I'll turn this off now.

[Tape is turned off, then on again]

S: Tell me about it. Do you mind?

G: Well, there's nothing to tell only that my uncle said, "The Japs ought to kill all of them, you know?"

S: Really? Now that was in eighteen what or?

G: 1904

S: 04?

G: Because I remember I was ten years old and I was living on Prince Avenue then.

S: Uh huh.

G: And ah, my uncle was a loom fixer too. And he and my mother (--) He lived in Dracut, but my mother always had a hot meal because they had an hour for lunch. My

mother always had a hot dinner. So he use to come over to our house for dinner, you know?

S: Yah.

G: So instead of carrying a cold dinner. So I use to hear them talking about Queen Victoria. "Dang it, he says, she's never going to die." I can remember them talking. Then talking about the Russians. See, they were doing this and they were doing that and hell he said, "Those Japs ought to kill all of them!" All of the Russians, you know? (S: Yah) I could hear them, their conversation, [S: Unclear] but it didn't mean anything to me then, but I can recall that you know. Well the housing conditions, no gas or electricity. No household appliances, no washing machines, refrigerators, irons or toasters. At the end of the First World War the doctors made housecalls then. And they used to come in little buggy, two-seater buggies.

S: And did your mother pay the doctor cash, or did she give him(--)

G: Oh she'd have to pay him in cash. Two dollars a visit.

S: Two dollars? Wow!

G: Then there were no fringe benefits at work then. If you were out sick you lost your pay, and there was no health benefits, and no nothing. If you wanted a two-weeks vacation you took it on your own.

S: Oh you never got vacation?

G: Oh no. there's was none of that.

S: How often did you get paid? Like once a week, or once (--)

G: Huh?

S: How often did you get paid?

G: Once a week.

S: Once a week. And did they give you cash?

G: Yah, yah. And (--)

S: Can you tell me about when they, when you got out of work at the end of a day in the mills, I heard people say that when they open the doors you know, there's a stream of people.

G: Oh! Like a bunch of rats.

S: Really. (G: Yah) How many people were there? I mean like hundreds?

G: Oh God, hundreds, yah, from three and four floors of workers, you know.

S: Umhm. And which street was that on, now, that they all came down?

G: Well that was on, on Lawrence Street, up near what use to be the cabinet shop. Hoffman's Furniture Store place I think is there now. And no fringe benefits at work. No health plans. No radio or televisions, or what have. The silent movies then, they use to have some movies. The small dinky little movie house, and they'd get the silent movies, you know? "Travels of Pauline," (S: Oh!) and all that stuff, for five cents, five cents to go in. That's when we were kids. My mother use to give us a-nickel on Saturday afternoon. We'd go down. There was La Scala and the Alhambra, the Royal and the Colonial.

S: Where were they? On what street? All in the same area?

G: Well, the La Scarla was on Central Street, just beyond the corner of Middlesex and Central Street. And the La Scarla, Alhambra was across the street at the corner of Hurd, or Green Street I think. I think there's a bank there now. Then there was one way up Merrimack Street, the Royal. That was up past city hall. They were all little dinky ones, you know? Five cents, some of them were ten cents.

S: And could you buy popcorn or things like that there?

G: Oh yah. Yah. And then there was one called the Colonial up on Middlesex Street, half way up Middlesex Street.

S: Did they have somebody playing the piano to go with the movies?

G: Yah they'd have a piano player for them to play. Suppose to watch the movie and play the right kind of music to go with whatever was going on, you know? Then the Five Cent Bank use to be at the corner where Cherry & Webb's is now in Lowell.

S: Oh okay, yah.

G: The first Five Cent Bank. Well that's torn down. The Five Cent Bank built there new bank on John Street. (S: Uh huh) Well that was torn down. That use to be The Five Cent Bank there. And ah, the Trolley cars, they use to run excursions to Hampton Beach every Wednesday, or Salisbury Beach. And in summer my mother use to take us with a lunch. And it run all the way from Lowell down to Salisbury Beach.

S: How long did that take? Quite awhile?

G: Oh yah, yah, but it was a nice ride in the summer you know?



S: What was the beach like in those days? Did (--)

G: Oh nothing like it is today, you know? There'd probably be the hobby horses and a penny arcade, you know? Put a penny in and buy a bag of chips, or buy something to eat, you know? That's about all it was. And the South Lowell explosion, I remember that.

S: Oh, when was that?

G: I'm ninety-one, and that was when I was ten years old, when we lived on Livingston Street. [Few words unclear] I was ten years old when I lived on Livingston Street ah, when that explosion came. I was out in the yard playing with the other kids and then all, it seems the whole of Lowell blew up. It seems as though the Cartridge Shop. They had what they called magazines, little red brick buildings that held all their ammunition. The powder, gun powder and stuff, that they made bullets and things with at the Cartridge Shop. And sometime there was an accident there someday. Somebody bumped something and they both exploded, and it tore down all Wigginville. Houses were blown up.

S: Was your house hurt?

G: Well we weren't living in Wigginville then. We were living in back of the Butler School.

S: Oh!

G: But I guess there was about, oh they had (--). The first thing we heard was the fire bells ringing, and the ambulance ringing. Well they were drawn by horses then. But they're ringing and ringing. Bells ringing going up Gorham Street and up over Moore Street, out to South Lowell. And well then they had, they brought in the militia and had to put up tents for people to live in. The houses were blown down. That was a terrible thing.

S: So it was like an ammunition company that made (--)

G: Well the cartridge, The Lowell Cartridge Company, Cartridge Shop. Ah yah, they use to make bullets you know, for the war and all that. But they keep their gun powder and everything way up in South Lowell off in the fields by itself in little red brick buildings, you know?

S: Oh, I see.

G: Little cubby hole building, but some (--)

S: Some accident happened.

G: Accident happened that it blew up. It blew a poor man. They said it blew him to pieces. They never found him. And there were quite a few killed then. And oh, Wigginville was pretty well demolished at that time. So I was ten-years old then. Now this is 1980? 85, that would be nineteen, [long pause-thinking, trying to figure out date] (--)

S: You were born what, 1893?

G: About 1900, 1905, (S: Yah) because 19, 1894 and I was ten years old when I was living, that's when I was there.

S: So a lot of people died in that or just (--)

G: Yah. And there were no pampers then. (S: laughs) Everybody had to wash diapers. [Laughs]

S: Oh my God! I can't imagine! [Laughs]

G: I never knew what it (--) We never had those then. With all my kids, I was never out of diapers. Everyday two lines of diapers.

S: Um. It's a lot of work with seven kids huh? Did you have them right in a row or (--)

G: Oh yah! Well seven in eleven years.

S: What did your parents do? Um, did they ever go out like on Saturday night and leave you kids home?

G: Yah, sometimes they use to go out to Lakeview.

S: Oh and that's Dracut right?

G: Huh?

S: Lakeville, um Lakeview Park?

G: Lakeview Park. (S: Yah) And they used to have a dance hall out there. And my mother and father use to go out there and dance Saturday nights.

S: Did they get a babysitter for you?

G: No we were old, they would trust (--) We were old enough to mind ourselves.

S: What did they do when you were younger? They just didn't go out?

G: Well they didn't go.

S: They just didn't go.

G: No.

S: So they just stayed at home. That's hard to imagine too.

G: Huh?

S: It's hard to imagine they didn't go out when they were younger, when they first had young children.

G: No, it was nothing.

S: Nothing.

G: Not till we were grown up enough to be able to (--) I would be the babysitter. I'd be able to take care of things. So they say, "well!" Father would say on Saturday night, "Let's go up to the lake and have a dance."

S: Umhm.

G: And they'd go out and go on the electric cars you know, and go out and have a couple of dances and come back.

S: Did you have any special chores around the house when you were young? I mean did you have one section to clean and your sister another part of the house?

G: Well we all had to kind of sort of take care of our own. Except I can remember that my mother always washed. She had to wash with the old scrub board, no washing machines. And then when we were living out in the cottage in Wigginville, it got to be a terrible chore for her, wash for all of us. She use to be exhausted at night and knocked out. So we said one time, "Now Ma you get, have the wash, everything ready on Monday night." When we got home from work, we'd each scrub a tub of clothes. (S: Umhm) The three sisters and my mother. So there was three tubs of clothes. She'd have everything sorted out, have the water all heated on the gas stove. And then ring them out through the ringer into bowling water. Ring them again, into the basket and then she'd take them out and hang them on the line. By ten o'clock at night she had all the wash done and hung on the line. And then we all had one, scrubbed a tub of clothes. So it wasn't like her doing the whole day long doing it, you know?

S: Now the boys never did that?

G: No.

S: No.

G: No. They, I don't know what they did, I don't remember. Probably brought up the coal, wood and coal. [Laughs]

S: When you were working and living at home still, and you said you gave your wages to your mother and she gave you some spending money back? (G: Yah) Did the boys have to do that too? (G: Yah) Everybody did.

G: When I (--) Well that was only my brother.

S: Umhm. Oh.

G: My brother. (S: That's right) When I started making more money in the mill, making twenty, if they were busy, thirty, thirty-five dollars, I'd give her my pay envelope and she'd take ten dollars out and put it under the oil cloth where the dishes were in the closet. That was my spending money. (S: Um) That's help to pay my mother's house. Pay for their home up there, you know. But what we made (--) Today now, the kids don't want to turn any money in. They work, they want to keep it. Well we always, all of us, we always handed our pay over to my mother every pay night. She'd take ten dollars out for each one of us and that was our weeks spending money and the rest went to the house.

S: So different huh?

G: Huh?

S: It's so different?

G: Oh!

S: Well we'll stop there.

[Tape is turned off, then on again]

G: Wooden walk (S: Uh huh) the whole length there, and there'd be little stores, a grocery store.

S: Now this was on Merrimack Street?

G: On Merrimack Street, all the way from High Street down to the canal. High Street, a grocery store, a butcher store, different kinds of stores, little stores, but it was like a boardwalk like you'd see in Virginia, pictures of Virginia City.

S: Oh right!

G: You know?

S: Yah!

G: On Merrimack, that side of Merrimack. Well that's all gone now you know. There's a different building. And of course all the buildings from the canal down to the Immaculate Conception Church were all torn down. That's when they built the auditorium after the First World War.

S: Was this neighborhood when you moved into, was a lot of different types of people? Like French, or Italian, or just (--)

G: What, this neighborhood?

S: Yah.

G: I don't know. I don't remember.

S: Just sort of a mixture of people.

G: No, no, but I (--)

**Interview ends**